

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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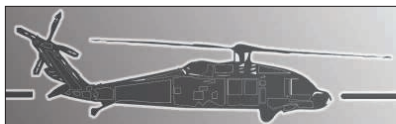
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MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2005

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Peer Mullah Khan, standing, with wife  
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PHOTO BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTOPHER SIX  
Stars and Stripes

### More teams take next dance step

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Syracuse's Hakim Warrick, left, and Craig Forth

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## News Tracker ... What's new with old news

### States

**Prison guard hostage trial:** An inmate charged with taking an Arizona prison guard hostage for 15 days plans to defend himself in his trial beginning Monday — and says he will have the woman he is accused of raping “in shreds” when he questions her on the stand.

Jury selection begins this week for Ricky Wassenaar's trial in the longest U.S. prison hostage situation in decades. Acting as his own attorney will allow Wassenaar, 41, to directly question the woman he allegedly took hostage and rape.

Wassenaar and another inmate, Steven Coy, are accused of taking two guards hostage at the Arizona State Prison Complex-Lewis in Buckeye on Jan. 18, 2004. They released one of the guards after a week but held the female guard until prison officials resolved the standoff by agreeing to transfer the inmates to prisons in other states.

**Boeing CEO fired:** The wife of ousted Boeing CEO Harry Stonecipher has filed for divorce, less than a week after the aerospace company's board forced him out for improper conduct related to an affair with a female executive.

Joan Stonecipher, 68, cited “irreconcilable differences” in papers filed Friday in Cook County, Ill., Circuit Court. The filing comes just a month after the couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. She listed her occupation as housewife and demanded a “fair and reasonable sum” from her husband, who she described as having “substantial income and wealth.”

### Business

**Tyco cleanup:** For Edward Breen, the head of scandal-plagued Tyco International, turning the Concord, N.H., company around required some serious housecleaning.

“Out of 450 people in our corporate office, 442 are new since I got there,” said Breen, who took over in 2002.

He even persuaded the board of directors — the very people who had hired him — to resign.

Two and a half years after taking the helm of a company besieged by scandal and debt, Breen, 48, has bragging rights that include a 33-percent increase in earnings.

### War on terrorism

**French journalist:** French authorities have received increasing contacts and information about a French journalist taken hostage in Iraq, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said Sunday.

Raffarin said the stepped-up communications offered cautious hope that Liberation newspaper reporter Florence Aubenas and Hussein Hanoun al-Saadi, her Iraqi interpreter, could be freed.

**Turkish detainee:** The U.S. lawyer for a Turkish man who has been held at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba said Sunday that Turkish officials have told his client's family he would be freed.

Attorney Baher Azmy said that Turkish military officials called the mother of Murat Kurmaz on Saturday and informed her that her son was being flown to a U.S. military base in Turkey.

The news comes days after Azmy told reporters in Germany where Kurmaz was born, that his client said he had been abused while in Guantanamo.

### World

**West Bank settlements:** Israel's Cabinet affirmed Sunday that it will dismantle 24 illegal West Bank settlement outposts, but did not give a deadline, and evaded decision on the fate of 81 more outposts, participants said.



**Funeral for Chicago judge's mother:** Susan Lawrence, right, a friend of the U.S. District Judge Joan Lewkow's family, grieves outside Saturday's memorial service for Donna Humphrey, Lewkow's mother, in Littleton, Colo. Humphrey was found shot execution style, along with Lewkow's husband, Michael, Feb. 28 in the basement of Lewkow's Chicago home. Although Bart Ross, the man responsible for the slayings, committed suicide on Wednesday, at least a dozen U.S. marshals were stationed around the church. Last September, Lewkow dismissed a lawsuit in which Ross blamed doctors for a medical procedure allegedly gone awry.

During their weekly meeting, ministers were briefed on an official report that said successive governments helped build and expand 105 outposts over the past decade. The Cabinet adopted the report, including recommendations that new laws be passed to make it easier to dismantle outposts in the future.

**Pakistan rape victim:** A journalist in eastern Pakistan said Sunday that he will propose marriage to a rape victim who attracted international media attention after she went public with her ordeal.

Rana Mohammed Arshad, 30, who works for a Lahore-based Urdu-language newspaper, said that in keeping with local traditions he, his mother and one of his brothers will travel to Mukhtar Mai's village to propose to her.

Mai drew international attention when she spoke about her rape in 2002 by several men in Mierwala, Pakistan. She was ordered raped by a council of village elders after her brother was accused of having sex with another woman.

**Tajikistan vote:** Tajik voters went to the polls Sunday to fill three parliamentary seats still vacant after last month's elections.

The first round of voting in the ex-Soviet republic was criticized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as falling short of democratic standards. It said authorities largely controlled the campaign and interfered with independent media.

**Chechen warlord killed:** Security forces hunting down insurgents in Chechnya killed a rebel warlord Sunday, officials said.

Kantash Mansarov, whom the authorities described as the coordinator of rebel undercover operations in the Chechen capital, Grozny, was reportedly killed while resisting arrest.

Mansarov had an assault rifle seized from a local policeman who had been killed by militants, Akhmed Dakayev, deputy interior minister in Chechnya's Moscow-backed ad-

ministration told Russia's state Rossiya television.

**Serbian war crimes suspect:** Serbia's government announced Sunday that another Serb suspect, a paramilitary leader accused of atrocities against Muslims during the Bosnian war, will surrender to the United Nations war crimes tribunal.

Golko Jankovic, indicted by the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia, has decided to give himself up after being on the run for more than five years, the authorities in Belgrade said.

**Kyrgyzstan runoff election:** Voters in Kyrgyzstan cast ballots on Sunday for parliamentary runoff elections amid a brewing controversy over whether the Central Asian country's longtime leader might seek to extend his rule beyond constitutional limits.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said the first round of voting for the 75-member parliament fell short of international standards, noting instances of vote buying, questionable disqualification of candidates and interference with the media. The government has dismissed those charges.

**Afghanistan plane crash:** Afghan authorities have completed their search for the bodies of more than 100 people who died last month when an airliner slammed into a mountain during a snowstorm, an official said Sunday.

Defense Ministry spokesman Mohammed Zahid Azimi also said the final death toll from the Feb. 3 crash could also rise to 106 — two more than originally announced — because one or two small children were also feared among the passengers.

**Nepal attacks:** Nepal's communist insurgents on Sunday threatened to step up attacks on government security forces and said they would stage road blockades and strikes across Nepal.

The elusive rebel leader Prachanda said the rebels would also follow up the regional blockades and protests with a 10-day nationwide strike beginning April 1. Prachanda, whose real name is Pushpa Kamal Dahal, said the action was called to protest King Gyandendra's Feb. 1 decision to impose emergency rule, suspending most civil liberties.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

# Two U.S. contractors killed in Hillah bombing

## GI gunned down in Mosul attack; Kurds, Shiites near completion on power-sharing deal

By TODD PITMAN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Two American security contractors were killed and a third wounded by a roadside bomb south of the Iraqi capital on Sunday while Kurdish leaders said they were nearing completion on a deal with the dominant Shiite-led alliance on forming a coalition government at this week's National Assembly.

The three contractors were working for Blackwater Security, a North Carolina-based contracting firm that provides security for U.S. State Department officials in Iraq. They were attacked Saturday on the main road to Hillah, south of Baghdad, U.S. Embassy spokesman Bob Callahan said.

A U.S. soldier also was gunned down late Saturday in a small arms fire attack in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, the U.S. command said Sunday.

Foreign contractors, too, are often targeted by anti-U.S. guerrillas. At least 232 American civilian security and reconstruction contractors were killed in Iraq up to the end of 2004, according to the Washington-based Brookings Institution.

The State Department said it was "deeply saddened" by the deaths of the two contractors and the wounding of another.

"These men were assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Iraq to protect American diplomats. They played a vital role in our mission to bring democracy, and opportunity to the people of Iraq," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a statement.



AP

**Iraqi tribal leaders attend a conference on regional federalism Sunday in Baghdad. In political developments, the country's main Shiite and Kurdish coalitions were putting the finishing touches on an agreement they hope to sign on Monday forming a coalition government, in advance of the National Assembly convening on Wednesday.**

The Blackwater employees were in the last vehicle in a four-vehicle convoy and were traveling to Hillah from Baghdad, Callahan said. A foreign security official said they were in a black Chevrolet Suburban. The road south traverses an area known as the "Triangle of Death" because of the frequency of insurgent attacks.

Blackwater said the contractors, who were not identified, were attacked on a highway just southeast of Baghdad's airport. The company said the wounded employee's injuries were not life-threatening.

In March 2004, four Blackwater employ-

ees were killed in the turbulent city of Fallujah, and two of the corpses were hung from a bridge, triggering a bloody three-week siege of the restive Sunni Muslim city west of Baghdad soon afterward.

Two Iraqis also were killed and five wounded Sunday when a roadside bomb missed a U.S. convoy in al-Obaidi in south-eastern Baghdad, said Dr. Ali Karim of Kindi hospital, where the casualties were brought.

In the north, Kurdish leaders said they would go ahead with a deal they made with the Shiite-dominated United Iraqi Alliance

last week to help form a coalition government when the 275-member National Assembly convenes on Wednesday.

The Kurds won 75 seats in the Assembly during Jan. 30 elections.

The alliance won 140 seats and needs Kurdish support to assemble the two-thirds majority to elect a president, who will then give a mandate to the prime minister.

"Talks between us did not fail. Both delegations went back to review the negotiations," said Pseud Masoum, a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Interim Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh, a Kurd, said the two sides were very close to reaching a comprehensive agreement, including the makeup of the coalition government and denied reports that their power-sharing deal had collapsed.

"The Kurdish and Shiite sides cooperate to reach a comprehensive agreement that will guarantee a national unity government for Iraq up to handling the upcoming challenges," Saleh said.

"There are some details that have to be determined soon and there are some loose ends regarding some details but at the same time, there are many principles that were agreed upon," he added.

Interim Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, a Kurd, said a Kurdish delegation was to meet with the alliance.

"We are going to Baghdad to continue discussion. We are very close to a final agreement. The meeting of the assembly on the 16th will take place as planned and there's no changes," he said.

## Reports: U.S. informed about rescue at last minute

The Associated Press

ROME — American officials in Iraq were told that an Italian intelligence officer was there to free a hostage but only at the very last minute, shortly before U.S. troops opened fire on their vehicle, killing the officer and wounding the woman, Italian media reported Sunday.

Several Italian officials cited a report all in the hands of Rome correspondent by Gen. Mario Marioli, an Italian who is the coalition forces' second-in-command. In it, Marioli said U.S. authorities were aware that the agent, Nicola Calipari, and another officer were in Iraq, but only he knew why. He said Calipari had told him not to tell the Americans they were there to collect a hostage.

Italian media have speculated that the reason for not telling the Americans was due to U.S. opposition to Italy's policy of negotiating with kidnappers.

However, Marioli also said that he finally told an American officer with him at the Baghdad airport — a certain "Capt. Green" — after getting a call that the mission had been a success and that the agents and freed journalist Giuliana Sgrena were on their way back, according to daily Corriere della Sera, Il Messaggero and La Stampa.

Calipari was killed March 4

## Families defend GIs' actions in shooting

By CRAIG GORDON

Newsday

WASHINGTON — Families of a New York Army National Guard unit are defending its actions in the checkpoint shooting of an Italian journalist and intelligence officer, with one nervous father saying his son told him "anybody in that unit would have done the same thing."

"Nobody takes any chances," said William Bambino of Wantagh, N.Y., who spoke to his son, Pfc. Phillip Bambino, two days after the March 4 checkpoint shooting, though his son wasn't involved. "If somebody doesn't heed a warning, they don't give them a second chance. A second chance is too late."

Pfc. Bambino is part of Manhattan's 69th Infantry Regiment of the 42nd Infantry Division, which was on duty when a car carrying a freed Italian journalist and her rescuer came upon a U.S. military checkpoint on Baghdad's notorious airport road.

U.S. soldiers say they gave a series of warnings but fired when the speeding car didn't stop, wounding the journalist and killing an Italian intelligence

agent. The Italian government charges that the soldiers opened fire without warning and that the car was traveling at moderate speed. The Bush administration has pledged a full investigation.

As word of the shooting has filtered home in media reports, some families of the "Fighting 69th" say the troops are nervous. Some worry that a witch-hunt mentality could arise in the probe due to Italian calls for answers, even as the troops tell of the intense pressures and split-second decision-making needed to guard a route targeted by insurgents.

Just two days before the shooting, the 69th had lost two soldiers from Queens in a roadside bomb attack. They are among more than a dozen members of the First Battalion, 69th Regiment that have died in combat since arriving in October. "They're all on edge," William Bambino said of his son, 23, and his fellow soldiers. Anti-U.S. attacks are "an everyday occurrence."

Some families worry it will be harder for soldiers to do their jobs for fear of being second-guessed. Already, human rights groups have stepped up criticism that U.S. checkpoint guards are too quick to shoot amid this and other recent friendly-fire slayings.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said the car was traveling slowly at night and stopped immediately when a light was flashed at a checkpoint, before U.S. troops fired on the car.

Sgrena has said that no light was flashed at the vehicle and that no warning shots were fired.

The U.S.-led coalition in Iraq has ordered an investigation into the shooting, with Italian officials participation.

## U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Saturday, at least 1,513 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,153 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is five higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Friday.

The Bush military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, eight; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,375 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,044 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

- No deaths reported.
- The latest identifications reported by the military:
- No identifications reported.

# Afghan baby is a special delivery

## U.S. soldiers help mother give birth on Black Hawk en route to base

BY KENT HARRIS

Stars and Stripes

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — The population of Afghanistan grew slightly Saturday, thanks in part to a pair of Black Hawk crews and a 25-year-old flight medic from Wiesbaden, Germany.

Air Force Sp. Kyle Storkbaken helped an Afghan mother deliver a healthy 6½-pound baby while aboard the Black Hawk flying to the U.S. military base in Salerno.

"This was my first delivery," Storkbaken said via a phone interview from Salerno, a remote base a few hours away by helicopter from Bagram.

It was the first such delivery that anyone associated with the current medical mission in country had knowledge of. Col. John Giddens, the commander of the 249th General Hospital at Bagram, said most Afghans the hospital sees are those critically injured by mines, accidents or attacks by anti-coalition forces.

"It's very nice to have a joyful emergency coming through our doors," he said.

Peer Mullah Khan, the baby's father, is a leader of the village next to the U.S. outpost at Shkin. Through a translator, he said he came to U.S. troops for help when his wife started struggling during labor.

Giving birth isn't a new experience for his wife, Melawa. The baby girl, who hasn't been named yet, is the couple's 14th child. Two have died, but the others — ranging from the newest addition to a 19-year-old girl — make for a large family. Two sons currently serve in the Afghan army.

American officials said they agreed to take the mother and father aboard the aircraft because it appeared that the placenta was between the baby and the birth canal, potentially putting both lives at risk. Fortunately, that turned out not to be the case.

In order to save time, one helicopter was dispatched from Salerno to Shkin to pick up the mother while another left Bagram to fly to Salerno. While the first helicopter was on its way back from the village to Salerno, the mother gave birth.

Storkbaken, assigned to the 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) at Wiesbaden, said he couldn't recall any specific emotions he had while helping deliver the baby.

"I guess you don't really think about what's going on until it's all over," he said.

Capt. Richard Mangini, the executive officer of the 68th Medical Company, of which Storkbaken is a part, said in-air births are a rarity. And it was even more special because of who was delivering the baby.

"He's our youngest and probably most inexperienced medic in terms of time on the job," he said.

Storkbaken said he's already received several good-natured jabs by his peers.

"Some of the guys have been calling me daddy," he said.

The real father and mother were expected to travel back to Salerno from Bagram on Monday with the newest member of their family.

E-mail Kent Harris at: harris.k@mail.estrpbes.osd.mil

# Army doctor seeks stateside care for 3-year-old Iraqi boy

BY CHARLIE COON

Stars and Stripes

BAQOUBA, Iraq — Abbasi isn't like most 3-year-old boys.

He hardly ever smiles or talks. Abbasi often runs a fever of 106 degrees, and when he lays down on his back, the outline of his swollen spleen can be seen pushing through his stomach.

"I was with him the one time he smiled," said Sp. Penney Gainer.

"It was my happiest moment since he has been here."

Qais Abbas, better known as Abbasi, is suffering from something that can't be pinpointed by the Iraqi doctors in Baqouba or the American ones at Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

So Dr. Carter, a pediatrician at the Teal Medical Aid Station, is pulling strings to have Abbasi flown for treatment to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Abbasi, the son of a coalition-friendly tribal sheik, or village leader, is thought to be suffering from leukemia or another disease that has caused his spleen and liver to swell and his blood counts to be dangerously low.

Abbasi's enlarged spleen gives his lungs less room to work, Carter said, making the boy work a little harder for every breath he takes.

Transporting Abbasi to the states for diagnosis and treatment has to be justified to the State De-

partment or Defense Department or both.

"We don't want to advertise that we can help every kid in town," he said. Doing so, Carter said, would undercut the Iraqis' own medical providers.

"But this is a very sick kid, and we care," he added.

Carter said he hoped a decision would be made within a week or two.

The Teal clinic is part of Company C, 203rd Forward Support Battalion, part of the 42nd Infantry Division's Task Force Liberty. Its Level 2 care capabilities enable the staff to treat everyday sick calls, sprains and strains, dehydration and some casualties of war.

It has operating and trauma rooms. In its first three weeks of operation, the staff treated

392 patients, including 112 Iraqis. Some of the staff have adopted Abbasi as one of their own. Gainer, of Cary, Ill., cradles Abbasi during the night shift while Sp. Joy Matine of Snodish, Wash., handles the day care.

"The first time I saw him I felt really bad because he looked really sick," Matine said. "Sometimes I'll take him outside for fresh air to get him out of his bed."

On Thursday the staff threw a little party for Abbasi, his third birthday. His gifts included a big, red stuffed bear, some clothes and other goodies.

Col. Steven Salazar, command-



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Dr. (Capt.) Matthew J. Carter holds Qais Abbas, better known as Abbasi. Carter, a pediatrician at the Capt. John Teal Medical Aid Station at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Baqouba, Iraq, is trying to get approval for Abbasi to be flown to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., for diagnosis of an undetermined medical condition.

er of the Warhorse-based 3rd Brigade Combat Team, said the request to transport Abbasi to Washington for treatment was a good use of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

"With all the dollars going into the overall fight, the dollars spent to take care of this boy is less than a drop in the bucket," Salazar said. "But it means a lot to the boy and a lot to a lot of people in the province of Diyala."

Abbasi is one of 22 children of

Sheik Ahmed Abdun al-Ahmeri of Bani Saad, located between Baghdad and Baqouba. He said he feels his son is part of his own body and is ready to do anything to make him feel better.

"I trust in God first," said Abdun, a Shiite, through a translator. "And then I trust the American physicians to help my son be better."

E-mail Charlie Coon at: coon.c@mail.estrpbes.osd.mil

## Iraqi training ends

VIENNA, Austria — Ten diplomats from Iraq have finished Austria-sponsored diplomatic training that taught them about human rights, negotiation tactics and business skills.

The eight men and two women began the course in January at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, the Austria Press Agency reported Sunday.

All said they needed the training.

"We were isolated for 13 years. We have a few things to catch up on," 30-year-old Maath al-Samari, one of the course participants, was quoted as saying.

All were aware of the risks they face as they return to Iraq, where government employees often are targeted by insurgents.

"We're potential targets," al-Samari was quoted as saying.

## Equipment missing

NEW YORK — Looters systematically stole large amounts of equipment capable of making parts for nuclear arms in the weeks following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq that ousted Saddam Hussein, a senior Iraqi official has told The New York Times.

Sami al-Araji, the deputy minister of industry, told the newspaper the operation appeared highly organized and that it had targeted certain plants in search of significant equipment.

"They came in with the cranes and the lorries, and they depleted the whole sites," Araji said.

"They knew what they were doing; they knew what they want. This was sophisticated looting."

Araji told The Times equipment capable of making parts for missiles as well as chemical, biological and nuclear arms was missing from eight or 10 sites that were the heart of Iraq's dormant program on unconventional weapons.

## Debt relief discussed

BAGHDAAD — Iraqi interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi has met with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and discussions focused on Iraq's debt, the government said.

The announcement Saturday did not say where or when the two men met, but a man who answered the telephone in Allawi's office on Sunday said "it was in a Gulf state."

He would not give his name. Schröder visited the seven Gulf states in weeklong tour that took him to seven countries, making him the first German chancellor to visit Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Yemen. He wrapped up the visit with a March 5 stop in the United Arab Emirates.

The announcement, issued by Allawi's spokesman on Saturday, said the two "discussed future close ties and relations between Germany and Iraq."

In Berlin, government officials refused to comment.

From The Associated Press



# Rights group: Abuses by U.S. date back '02

By VERENA DOBNIK  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Unreleased U.S. Army reports detailing the beating deaths of two Afghan men at the hands of American soldiers show that military prison abuses began in Afghanistan in 2002, and were part of a systematic pattern of mistreatment, a human rights representative said Saturday.

More than two dozen American soldiers face possible criminal prosecution — and one already is charged with manslaughter — in the deaths at the main U.S. detention facility in Bagram, just north of the Afghan capital of Kabul.

As documented by the Army's Criminal Investigation Command, the men died a year before the photographed horrors at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, according to John Sifton, the Afghanistan researcher for the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

In a phone interview, Sifton said his group had obtained 20 pages of electronically scanned Army reports.

The American Civil Liberties Union said to obtain the case files under the Freedom of Information Act, but the Army withheld portions of the records because of an ongoing investigation and possible charges.

On Saturday, a Pentagon spokesman, Lt. Col. Jeremy Mathison, would say only that the cases from 2002 "were thoroughly investigated and people were punished appropriately."

"The Bush Administration and the Pentagon describe the abuse problems as isolated incidents, not systematic, not part of a plan, he evidence shows otherwise," Sifton said. "Far from being isolated incidents, these beatings were part of a pattern of abuse."

Members of the 59th Military Intelligence Battalion who set up intelligence operations at the Bagram facility did the same at the Abu Ghraib prison.

The two Afghan detainees died in December 2002 — a week apart — as reported in Army memos, with updates detailing their fate after they were captured by Afghan forces and handed to the U.S. military.

There were several other deaths of Afghans in American custody before December 2002, Sifton said, "and we want more information."

"It's amazing," he said. "Nobody has been punished for this. The command has recommended that 28 people be prosecuted for this, but only two have been charged so far."

The unreleased Army documents detail U.S. military investigations of the deaths of a man named Mullah Habibullah, about 30, and another identified only as "Detainee 12," a taxi driver with a 2-year-old daughter, according to Sifton.

The Army has publicly acknowledged the two deaths and announced in October that up to 28 U.S. soldiers face possible charges in connection with what were ruled homicides.

edges have been reprehensible, U.S. officials say.

The scandals have triggered a spate of investigations and some low-level personnel have been punished. But thus far, senior military officers and civilian Pentagon officials have escaped blame. Earlier this year, Cuba and Zimbabwe served on a five-nation working group assigned to get part of the agenda for this year's meeting.

Cuba tried to get fellow working group members to get the U.S. prisoner abuse scandal on the agenda, but the effort fell short by a 3-1 vote, with Zimbabwe abstaining. This, however, will not prevent that issue from being a resolution at the commission's deliberations.

Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque raised the possibility last week that he will introduce a resolution at the commission condemning the United States for prisoner mistreatment.



Johnny Spann, father of slain CIA officer Mike Spann, pauses at his son's gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. The younger Spann was the first American to die after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

## Slain CIA agent's father hunts for answers about son's death

By JEFFREY MCMURRAY  
The Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — Johnny Spann stood in gently falling snow and wistfully recalled the day his son, CIA officer Johnny Michael "Mike" Spann, lingered among the tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery, studying each inscription and testing his sister Tanya's patience.

"Mike, let's go," she implored. "They're all the same."

"No, Tanya, they're not," the younger Spann replied. "There are stories behind them."

It is Mike Spann's story that draws Johnny Spann to Arlington now.

There is no greater objective for the grieving father these days than gathering the facts behind the uprising on Nov. 25, 2001, at the makeshift prison in Afghanistan where his son became the first American casualty of the Afghan war.

Spann, a 56-year-old real estate company owner from Winfield, Ala., visited Mike Spann's grave last month for the third time in as many days. The elder Spann placed flowers and contemplated the chain of events that put his son in a national cemetery.

Upon returning to his rental car at the roadside, he wiped tears from his eyes.

"Even after four years, it doesn't get any easier," Spann said.

Articulate and folksy, with combed-back hair that is two shades of gray, Spann thrusts through a sheaf of documents and explains his son's last living moments with methodical calm. It is the same trait he displayed daily at the trial of John Walker Lindh, the American fighting alongside the Taliban.

Spann is conducting his own investigation into the origins of the riot at the prison in Mazar-e-Sharif where suspected Taliban supporters were held.

U.S. government agencies, Spann said, are not inclined to piece together the entire story.



Spann

By investigating for himself, "No lies get told and nothing gets covered up," he said. "I've got more at stake than have. I want to know."

During his visit to Washington, Spann shared with The Associated Press a videotape that shows the two hours leading up to the fatal riot.

Spann contends the last two minutes of footage prove the uprising began with a planned grenade attack inside the prison building rather than a spontaneous scuffle outside where his son was interviewing prisoners, including Lindh.

The distinction could be critical in Lindh's quest to get clemency for his 20-year prison term. One of the most serious charges against Lindh was that the uprising was planned the night before, yet he did not warn Spann.

At trial, Lindh claimed no knowledge of the riot plot. The judge seemed to agree. If there were evidence that Lindh was responsible for the younger Spann's death, the judge said, then a plea bargain would not have been accepted that spared Lindh more serious charges, such as murder or treason.

Spann's father is convinced that such evidence exists. He refers to Lindh as "hard core al-Qaida" and says if Lindh really wanted to help a fellow American, he would have spoken up that morning.

Because he did not, Spann contends, Lindh was complicit in the younger Spann's death. Some day, the father is hoping to prove this legally, in an attempt to get Lindh's plea bargain thrown out.

An intelligence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the circumstances surrounding the incident at the prison were reviewed. The official said some prisoners burst out of the building firing weapons while Spann and a colleague were interviewing prisoners outside.

Spann said the doctors told him that his son charged toward the prison building — right into a trap — when the grenade went off.

Later, Spann said, he reviewed autopsy reports that showed his son had two bullet wounds to the head. That indicates a method of death consistent with an execution-style slaying, Spann said.

"That doesn't sound like two people in a fight getting shot," Spann said. "That sounds like one guy is on his knees or something getting shot."

## U.S. ready to face criticism of prison abuses in Middle East

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission opens on Monday in Geneva with the United States prepared to confront critics ready to highlight the abuses by U.S. military personnel of Iraqi, Afghan and other prisoners.

In previous years, the United States has been free to focus on the rights shortcomings of other countries at commission meetings.

But continuing disclosures about prisoner mistreatment dating back to last spring have required the administration to adopt a defensive strategy for the coming six-week convocation. As part of a damage control plan, U.S. delegates have devised a pro-active approach for the meeting. They will point to American efforts to hold accountable those responsible for behavior that the administration acknowl-

**U.N. rights meeting to begin, Page 8**

## Two Marines wounded

KABUL, Afghanistan — Militants armed with rockets and machine guns ambushed Marines patrolling in eastern Afghanistan, wounding two of the American troops, the military said Sunday.

The patrol came under attack on Saturday in an area north of

the city of Jalalabad and close to the Pakistani border, the U.S. military said. The assaults quickly retreated, it said.

The two injured Marines continued with their mission after treatment at the scene for shrapnel wounds.

U.S. and Afghan government troops clash regularly with militants in southern and eastern Af-

ghanistan, where Taliban-led rebels have maintained a stubborn insurgency since 2001.

While attacks have declined in recent months, Taliban officials have vowed to step up their campaign with the melt of the winter snow, despite high-profile peace overtures from U.S. commanders and Afghan leaders.

From The Associated Press

# Daily-life therapy: Home ec for amputees

BY SUSAN LEVINE  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The wheelchairs, crutches and still-healing bodies show up for lunch every Wednesday, crowding into a diminutive kitchen where the washers and dryer sit cheek by jowl with the electric range, and the sink is wedged between the fridge and a small counter space.

No one seems to mind the congestion. Most grumble good-naturedly as they brown hamburger meat and pull cupcakes out of the oven, sometimes bending or stirring awkwardly if a missing limb has yet to be supplanted or an artificial limb is too new for real dexterity.

In this third-floor corner of the world at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, too many cooks is a welcome scenario.

The kitchen is a regular stop for injured soldiers and Marines who come to Walter Reed during their long recovery after serving in Iraq.

It's part of a mock apartment that was dubbed Fort Independence when it opened nearly two years ago. Today, everybody just calls it "the apartment."

Inside the ersatz front door are a sofa, TV, desk and computer, a recliner and dresser, a twin bed and bathroom. It's not so different from home, despite the 3-6-foot width. But for those who have lost arms and legs, it's a safer place than home to start practicing what they soon must do on their own — from rolling out of bed to maneuvering between wheelchair and toilet, to running a load of laundry.

"We have them demonstrate, not just to us but to themselves, that these things are possible,"

said Col. William Howard III, chief of the hospital's occupational therapy program.

For 90 minutes or so each Wednesday, the program includes cooking.

The kitchen therapy is seldom much of a tough sell. In contrast to the one-on-one nature of other rehabilitation, this duty provides an irreverent group with a camaraderie that is itself therapeutic.

The head cook usually is Capt. Katie Yancosek, a vivacious occupational therapist who takes as well as she gives with no consideration to rank.

"Everything that was easy before is harder or takes a lot more time," she said. Or a lot more thought. She shows soldiers who are missing hands or arms how best to cradle a mixing bowl, and she warns those with lower-limb amputations never to bend over an open oven door.

With nearly a dozen participants and onlookers Wednesday, Yancosek had a full house. The menu was soup, hot dogs, sandwiches and little meatballs dressed in maple syrup.

Marine 1st Lt. Erasmo Valles, 29, had been drafted for nighttime meatball duty. He once himself had been adept at his outdoor grill but that was before an anti-tank mine nearly destroyed his legs. His right leg now has a metal plate in the foot; the left leg ends in the glint of a prosthesis.

Valles moved carefully at the sound of a timer going off, mitt on his left hand, crutch under his right arm. He slowly took a shallow tray out of the oven and turned to put it on the table. Behind him, another soldier gently closed the oven door with his foot.

It was Valles' first time in the apartment kitchen, and it was a



PHOTOS BY ANDREA BRUCE WOODALL,  
THE WASHINGTON POST/LATWP

Top: Sgt. Tim Gustafson, injured in Iraq, practices cooking and eating with his wife, Janice Gustafson, in a mock apartment at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, dubbed Fort Independence. Right: Pfc. Chase Savage and 1st Lt. Erasmo Valles work cooking and baking in the apartment's kitchen.

decided success. No meatballs hit the floor. Everyone proclaimed them delicious. And the most satisfied patron was the Marine's year-old son, Lorenzo.

One by one, Valles fed his son meatballs. Lorenzo kept looking for more, until finally Valles put the little boy on his knee and began to bounce him.

First on Daddy's real knee. Then on his new one.



## Rumblings of discontent hinder new Iraqi government

BY ALISSA J. RUBIN  
Los Angeles Times

BAGHDAD — With Iraqis increasing concern about a security vacuum, the man who is expected to become the next prime minister on Saturday denounced the winning parties' inability to form a government nearly six weeks after millions of people risked their lives to vote.

In an interview, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, the nominee of the slate that won the most votes in the Jan. 30 election, said it could take two more weeks to close a deal.

Behind the scenes, the two largest vote-getters, al-Jaafari's Shiite-dominated United Iraqi Alliance and the Kurds, are engaged in frantic negotiations. The groups are meeting almost around the clock, and there has been constant maneuvering as the two try to find a position that

**"Well, if they (the new assembly) cannot form a government, then I think they are not qualified to manage the country's affairs. This vacuum of power increases the number of terrorist acts, it opens the way for the terrorists."**

Mohammed Saddoun  
Shopkeeper in Baghdad

allows a compromise between them but also satisfies their respective constituencies.

But ordinary Iraqis, frightened by two large suicide bombings this month that killed at least 200 people, are questioning why the brave insurgents' threats to cast their votes.

Mohammed Saddoun, ashopkeeper, stood in front of his storefront grocery last week when he saw the slow progress by the newly elected National Assembly's in forming a government.

"I am not only frustrated — I am ready to burst with anger," Saddoun said. "We put our souls in the ... palms of our hands and went to the ballot centers."

"Well, if they (the new assembly) cannot form a government, then I think they are not qualified to manage the country's affairs. This vacuum of power increases the number of terrorist acts, it opens the way for the terrorists."

Throughout Baghdad, one of the most mixed cities in Iraq, there are rumblings of discontent and cynicism about the new government,

even though many people here voted for one of the three parties that took the most votes — the United Iraqi Alliance; the Iraq party of interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, or the Kurdish Party.

The doubts are deeper among those who did not vote — supporters of anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and many Sunni Muslims who feel they have been left out of the political equation.

At stake is the relative power of the different slates, control over

key ministries and other powerful positions in the government, and policies on some of the most contentious issues in Iraq, such as control of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and the power of the provinces relative to the central government.

"The Kurds are making demands no one can grant and still keep the support of the Iraqi people," said Jaber Habib, a professor of political science at Baghdad University.

In the interview Saturday, al-Jaafari signaled that the alliance did not feel bound to adhere strictly to the transitional administrative law, known as the TAL.

"The TAL has many positive sides ... but there are also many negative aspects to it ... or missing aspects of the TAL," al-Jaafari said. "Since we are coming to the new constitution, we are trying to bridge those gaps. But we can make use of the positive parts of it."

# Former foes meet again for Iwo Jima anniversary

## U.S. and Japanese veterans pay tribute to those who died in battle 60 years ago

BY FRED ZIMMERMAN

Stars and Stripes

**M**IWO JIMA, Japan — Once determined to kill one another met again this weekend, but this time in peace at a ceremony to pay tribute to warriors who never left this desolate island.

More than 60 U.S. veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima and a handful of their Japanese counterparts met at the Reunion of Honor monument on a hill overlooking Yellow Beach, where many U.S. Marines landed on Feb. 19, 1945 — the first time during the war that U.S. ground forces set foot on Japanese soil.

This year was the 60th anniversary of one of World War II's bloodiest battles. More than 100,000 U.S. troops fought to take the island, suffering more than 26,000 casualties including more than 6,800 deaths. Fewer than 1,000 of the 22,000 Japanese defenders survived.

Iwo Jima was strategically important to the U.S. bombing campaign of Japan. Once taken, fighter planes could be based there to escort bombers on missions; bombers returning crippled

could land there, possibly saving their crews from crashing or ditching at sea. By the war's end, 2,251 B-29s with 24,761 crewmen made emergency landings on the island.

During the ceremony, retired Lt. Gen. Larry Snowden, who fought on Iwo Jima, said the Japanese defenders fought to protect their homeland while the Marines "fought to bring the end of the war and go home."

Snowden added that "hatred was the motivating force 60 years ago, but peace should breed friendship — and that's what happened in the years since."

Gen. Michael Hages, Marine Corps commandant speaking at the Iwo Jima memorial ceremonies in World War II to remember "Our first duty is to remember."

Gen. Michael Hages, Marine Corps commandant, said during the ceremony, "Our first duty is to remember."

In World War II's four years, Hages said, 353 Medals of Honor were awarded — 27 of them from actions during the 36 days of fighting on Iwo Jima. He recalled Adm. Chester Nimitz's words in praising those who fought that battle, saying, "Uncommon valor was a daily commonplace."

Kyoshi Endo, the chairman of the Japanese Iwo Jima Veterans Association, also spoke about remembering the past. Endo served as North Iwo Jima Division commandant until the end of the battle.

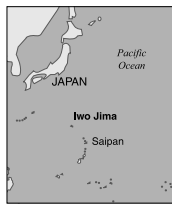
"Truly, memories of the tragic Battle of Iwo Jima have faded away through generations," Endo said. "Our responsibilities and duties are to dedicate the rest of our lives to passing our memories on to our next generations so that a tragic battle of this kind would never be repeated."

While all spoke of the tragedy of the battle, many also talked about the friendship that has been built since. Hages said grandchildren of men who fought on the island as foes now stand together as allies in Iraq and elsewhere throughout the world.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshino Mori said the two countries are working together for world peace and security. "I believe that our cooperation is a great tribute to the spirits of Japanese and American soldiers who died on this island," said Mori, who said he learned much about peace by witnessing the veterans gather in friendship.

After the speeches, U.S. and Japanese officials placed wreaths at the foot of the monument. Japanese officials made the symbolic offering to the fallen of pouring water over the marker. Rifles cracked in a 21-gun salute. The assembly then observed a 30-second moment of silence; the only sounds were of the wind blowing the grass and distant waves pounding the black beach.

As have so many other such gatherings on the desolate Pacific island, the ceremony ended with the echoing of taps.

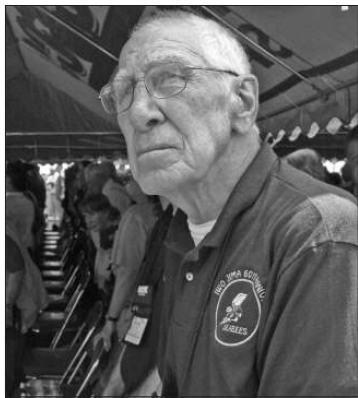


Pacific Ocean

Iwo Jima

Saipan

Stars and Stripes



PHOTOS BY FRED ZIMMERMAN/Stars and Stripes

Elmer Rome stands in silence as taps is played Saturday at the 60th anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Iwo Jima on the island. As a Navy Seabee with the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion, Rome landed in the second wave on Iwo Jima. He called the black sand beach home for 17 days.

## Seabee shares island memories with family

**IWO JIMA, Japan** — On Saturday, Elmer Rome stood again on the black sand beach of Iwo Jima that he called home for 17 days in 1945.

Sixty years ago, he first set foot on the island as a young petty officer third class with the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion. The unit, attached to the 4th Marine Division, was in the second wave of troops to land on the island — just eight minutes after the first wave. Rome said they had to jump over the landing crafts' sides and wade to shore, but he doesn't remember the water being too deep.

"We were 1,014 guys who had no idea of what we were getting into," he said. "I saw all the ones that were killed or maimed lying there on the beach," Rome said. "I was never scared and never hurt ... I was too focused on my job."

The U.S. forces were taking so many casualties that every time he and his fellow Seabees ran supplies to the front, they returned carrying stretchers bearing the wounded. He said a photo of him carrying a stretcher was on a 1945 Look magazine cover.

After living on the beach for 17

days, Rome said, the Seabees moved almost directly across the island, where they built water tanks at a desalination site. He also helped build some barracks near the site.

Rome had returned to Iwo Jima just once, in 1995, when he brought a daughter to the commemoration. This year, he brought all 10 of his children.

Rome's children said that growing up, they knew little of what their father did on Iwo Jima.

"He just wouldn't talk about it," said daughter Mary-Anne Osborne. "Until he came back for the 50th anniversary. Then he would talk about it occasionally."

Son T.J. said he'd learned things from his father this past week that he'd never heard before — such as how he went to the cemetery to visit the graves of seven friends who had died.

T.J. said the family was able to get their hands on some of his history. They found and purchased two copies of the Look magazine issue with him on the cover.

"I think they paid about \$10," said the elder Rome.

T.J. replied, "It was a lot more than \$10, dad. But you don't need to worry about how much it was."

—Fred Zimmerman



Members of the Japanese delegation pour water over the Reunion of Honor monument Saturday during the 60th anniversary commemoration of the battle of Iwo Jima.

## 4 Fort Knox drill sergeants charged with abusing recruits

The Associated Press

**FORT KNOX, Ky.** — Four Army drill sergeants were charged Friday with abusing recruits who were allegedly slammed into lockers and pulled down a hallway by their ankles. The Army said the recruits also were pushed, slapped and kicked.

The alleged abuse began when the recruits reported for duty Feb. 3 and ended

five days later, according to the Fort Knox public affairs office.

The drill sergeants were investigated after their battalion commander received reports of abuse from soldiers in an adjacent barracks.

Sgt. 1st Class David H. Price, 36; Sgt. 1st Class Ricky L. Stauffer, 35; Staff Sgt. Michael G. Rhoades, 33; and Staff Sgt.

Bryan G. Duncan, 26; were charged with maltreatment of soldiers and obstruction of justice. Price faces an additional charge of violation of a lawful regulation.

Each is to have a special court-martial, but no court dates were immediately set. The maximum punishment is a year confinement, forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for a year, and a reduction to the

lowest enlisted grade.

When reached by telephone, Stauffer declined to comment. Phone messages left for Price and Duncan were not immediately returned Friday, and a telephone number for Rhoades could not be located.

All were assigned to Company E, 1st Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment, part of Fort Knox's 1st Armor Training Brigade.

E-mail Fred Zimmerman at: [zimmermanf@stripes.com](mailto:zimmermanf@stripes.com)

## IN THE WORLD

## Pope leaves Rome hospital

BY AIDAN LEWIS  
The Associated Press

ROME — With thousands cheering him on, Pope John Paul II returned to the Vatican on Sunday, two weeks after undergoing that surgery to ease his breathing problems and hours after greeting pilgrims in a raspy voice that raised hopes he would fully recover.

The 84-year-old pope crossed himself just before he left Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic hospital in a gray Mercedes minivan with tinted windows rather than in the glass-paneled popemobile he used after a previous hospitalization last month.

Patients in robes ventured out onto their balconies to bid the

pope farewell, and cries of "Viva il Papa!" ("Long live the pope!") were heard as the van made the trip back to the Holy See.

Earlier Sunday, the pope spoke just a few words to the faithful gathered beneath his 10th-floor hospital suite, waving and making the sign of the cross with a steady hand.

"Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for your visit," he said, reading from a sheet of paper. "To everyone, have a good Sunday and a good week."

It was the first time since his Feb. 24 operation to insert a breathing tube in his windpipe that John Paul addressed the faithful in remarks carried live. In three previous appearances, the pope had remained silent.

The Vatican's brief statement announcing his release made clear that the pope was not cured but was well enough to continue his recovery back at St. Peter's.

The Holy See had said last week that John Paul would be released in time for Holy Week celebrations, which begin on March 20 with Palm Sunday and culminate a week later with Easter.

The Holy See did not say whether the breathing tube had been removed or replaced with another type designed to make it easier for him to speak. His next health update was expected on Monday.

The pope's speaking difficulties are complicated by Parkinson's disease, raising concerns over John Paul's ability to communicate and guide the world's 1 billion Roman Catholics.



Pope John Paul II waves Sunday as he arrives at the Vatican after leaving Gemelli Polyclinic hospital, in Rome. Seated behind him is Sister Luisa. The pontiff had been hospitalized with a breathing crisis.



A communist supporter holds a poster addressed to President Bush during a demonstration Sunday against the Syrian withdrawal of troops from Lebanon.

## Dates of final Syrian troop withdrawal not scheduled

BY HUSSEIN DAKROUB  
The Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon — A Syrian has withdrawn nearly a third of his troops from Lebanon, a senior official said Sunday, but the Lebanese foreign minister said a date for a complete withdrawal would not be set until a meeting of the military leadership of the two countries that was scheduled for April 7.

Meanwhile, a pro-Syrian rally organized by Hezbollah drew at least 100,000 protesters in the southern maronite town of Nabatieh.

They burned Israeli flags and waved posters of Syrian President Bashar Assad — the second such rally the militant Shiite Muslim group has sponsored in a week.

The senior Syrian official said about 4,000 soldiers had crossed the border into Syria since the pullout began on Tuesday and the remaining 10,000 were in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.

About 4,000 soldiers in Lebanon's central mountains have been redeployed to the Bekaa region.

This is in addition to 6,000 troops already stationed in the Bekaa," the military official said on condition of anonymity.

He said the fate of the 10,000 troops remaining in the Bekaa would be discussed by the April 7 military commission.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Mahmoud Hammoud also said the joint military commission would set the "duration, time and location in these matters." Hammoud did not mention a specific date for the meeting, but the official said it was to be held on April 7.

Hammoud made his remarks after meeting with U.N. envoy Terje Røed-Larsen in Beirut, a day after Røed-Larsen had visited Assad.

President Bush, who repeatedly has called for a full Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, wants Syria to move out before Lebanon's parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in April and May.

Asked if the final withdrawal could take place before the elections, Hammoud said it was up to the joint military commission to decide.

## Some say U.N. rights commission needs reform to regain credibility

BY SAM CAGE  
The Associated Press

GENEVA — The U.N. Human Rights Commission must reform itself to restore its sinking credibility, say rights groups who accuse the worst-offending countries of using their membership in the agency to protect each other from condemnation.

"The commission has become a refuge for governments like Sudan, which should be in the dock rather than on the top U.N. rights body," said Kenneth Roth, executive director of the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

The U.N. commission — which starts its annual six-week session Monday — must address long-standing problems, in particular that some of its 53 member states "routinely resort to double standards in addressing country situations," officials of Amnesty International said.

Several possible changes have been suggested, including extending participation in the watchdog agency to all U.N. members, or excluding those with poor records of their own.

Under U.N. rules, members are picked by regional groups. Current member states that have been criticized for their records include China, Cuba, Nepal, Russia and Zimbabwe.

"The commission must focus on protecting human rights, instead of blocking criticism of members that commit serious rights abuses," Roth told reporters last week.

A high-level U.N. panel has reported that the commission's ability to promote respect for human rights "has been undermined by eroding credibility."

About half the commission's current members will attend this session "not to promote human rights, but to undermine them,"

and this is reducing the credibility of the whole United Nations organization, Roth said.

"There is a question of whether the commission in its current form is a viable method of protecting human rights," Roth told reporters.

The most important issue at this year's meeting is the threat to human rights posed by governments' anti-terror campaigns, Roth said.

Campaigners called on the commission to condemn treatment of detainees by the United States and to ask that Washington give independent monitors access to terrorism suspects. Human Rights Watch is asking the commission to appoint a monitor with a three-year mandate to address terror and counter-terror issues.

"Exclusion of evidence (obtained through torture) is another matter we hope the commission will give due attention to," Amnesty's Peter Splinter said.

## Europeans probe CIA 'renditions'

BY CRAIG WHITLOCK  
The Washington Post

MILAN, Italy — A radical Egyptian cleric known as Abu Omar was walking to a Milan mosque for noon prayers in February 2003 when he was grabbed on the sidewalk by two men, sprayed in the face with chemicals and stuffed into a van. He hasn't been seen since.

Milan investigators, however, appear to be close to identifying his kidnappers. Last month, officials showed up at Aviano Air Base in northern Italy and demanded records of any American planes that had flown into or out of the joint U.S.-Italian military installation around the time of the abduction. They also asked for logs of vehicles that had entered the base.

Italian authorities suspect the Egyptian was the target of a CIA-sponsored operation known as rendition, in which terrorism suspects are forcibly taken for interrogation to countries where torture is practiced.

The Italian probe is one of three official investigations that have surfaced in the past year into renditions believed to have taken place in Western Europe. Although the CIA usually carries out the operations with the help or blessing of friendly local intelligence agencies, law enforcement authorities in Italy, Germany and Sweden are examining whether U.S. agents might have broken laws by detaining terrorist suspects on European soil and subjecting them to abuse or maltreatment.

The CIA has kept details of rendition cases a closely guarded secret, but has defended the controversial practice as an effective and legal way to prevent terrorism. Intelligence officials have testified that they have relied on the tactic with greater frequency since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The Bush administration has received backing for renditions from governments that have been criticized for their human rights records, including Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan, where many of the suspects are taken for interrogation. But the administration is getting a much different reception in Europe, where lawmakers and prosecutors are questioning whether the practice is a blatant violation of local sovereignty and human rights.



# Iran. Europe moving too slowly on nuclear talks

BY TAREK AL-ISSAWI

The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran said Sunday its nuclear talks with Europe were moving too slowly, adding that it didn't rule out negotiations with Washington as long as America recognizes Tehran's right to peaceful nuclear program.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said a permanent halt of Iran's nuclear activities was out of the question but said it was not yet ready to declare the "complicated and difficult" talks with Europeans a failure.

"Talks with Europe have not met our satisfaction yet," Asefi told reporters. "The talks are taking longer than we expected."

Iranian officials have previously accused European negotiators of wasting time and not making proposals that conform to the Iranian bottom line — that it will develop peaceful nuclear technology.

The crux of the negotiations,

Asefi said, involves securing European approval for a nuclear program built with guarantees that the technology won't be diverted toward weapons.

Washington insists Tehran's uranium enrichment program is aimed at developing a bomb, not merely providing an alternative energy source.

"We are not seeking nuclear weapons," Asefi said. "We announce again that nuclear weapons have no place in our defense and security doctrine."

Talks between Iran and Britain, Germany and France, who negotiate on behalf of the European Union, ended without result last week. The two sides have agreed to meet again March 23.

Asefi said Iran might agree to direct negotiations with the United States if Washington acknowledged Tehran's right to develop nuclear technology. Otherwise, U.S. entry into the negotiations would likely cause them to fail.

On Saturday, Asefi rejected

U.S. overtures aimed at coaxing Tehran to drop its nuclear ambitions.

The mild concessions, announced earlier by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, include dropping opposition to Iran's application for membership in the World Trade Organization and allowing the sale of some spare parts for civilian aircraft.

National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley insisted the United States is not offering concessions to Iran or engaging the regime that President Bush has described as "the world's primary state sponsor of terror."

"What we are doing is removing some objections to something the Europeans are doing," Hadley said on a Fox News Sunday.

"But I do not think that the Iranian regime can take much comfort in this because as part of this arrangement, the Europeans now for the first time are talking about Iranian support to terror and the need for the Iranian regime to listen to their people and to give them greater role in the political process."

Asefi said Rice's offer amounted to nothing in the way of a concession. Iran, he said, is not afraid of being referred to the Security Council.

# Rice entering diplomatic fray to lure N. Korea back to talks

BY BURT HERMAN

The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Condoleezza Rice is the latest entrant in a flurry of Asian diplomacy aimed at luring North Korea back to disarmament talks, with the two-year-old crisis at a new high since the North claimed last month it has nuclear weapons and would boycott the derailed talks.

The U.S. secretary of state's trip starting Monday to China, Japan and South Korea is her first to the region since taking the top spot at the State Department, and is to review with our partners our diplomatic efforts to convene the next round of six-party talks, spokesman Richard Boucher said.

Since the North claimed on Feb. 10 that it has nuclear weapons and would stay away from the nuclear

negotiations, the other countries involved in the talks — China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States — have sent busy scurrying across the continent.

But breakthroughs and bold proposals have been scarce, as with evidence proving the North really has nuclear bombs.

It was Rice's current during verification hearings, grouping North Korea among the world's "outposts of tyranny," that the North seized on as a reason for shunning the nuclear talks. The North has

also taken President Bush's sweeping rhetoric on spreading freedom around the world as tacitly aimed at the overthrow of Kim Jong Il's regime.

And North Korea is sure to scrutinize the Bush administration's recent nomination of one of the North's most outspoken critics — top arms control official John Bolton — as its ambassador to the United Nations.

North Korea might worry that Bolton will press the U.S. Security Council for sanctions against the North, said Peter Beck, Seoul-based director of the North East Asia Project for the International Crisis Group think tank.

The North has hinted at possible compromises. Kim Jong Il told a visiting Chinese diplomat his country would return to the talks if the United States shows "trustworthy sincerity."



Rice



An Albanian man, joined by his family, looks at the ballot paper Sunday during Macedonia's municipal elections in the village of Zajaz. Fights broke out at four polling stations, causing voting to be postponed.

# Fights at polls delay Macedonian voting

The Associated Press

SKOPJE, Macedonia — Scuffles between election workers shut down at least three Macedonian polling stations Sunday as voters cast ballots in municipal elections — the first held under regions intended to help the ethnically tense republic close closer ties with Europe.

Election Commission spokesman Zoran Tanevski said fights broke out at four stations, one near the capital, Skopje, and three in other parts of the country. One of them remained open, he said, but he did not specify which one.

He described the incidents as minor and said voting in the three districts affected by the closures would be postponed until March 27. He said no problems were reported at the other nearly 3,000 polling stations nationwide.

International observers are in the former Yugoslav republic to monitor the poll to elect local government officials in new municipalities created following an ethnic Albanian rebel insurgency four years ago.

An internationally brokered cease-fire paved the way for the reforms.

Ethnic Albanians, demanding minority-rights guarantees from

the majority Macedonian Slavs, will gain greater autonomy under the reformed local government system with expanded control over schools, law enforcement and taxation.

"The most important thing for Macedonia and all of us is to have peaceful, fair and democratic elections today," President Branko Crvenkovski said after leaving near the capital, Skopje.

"This will be ... a big step forward toward our strategic goal, a place in Europe."

Nearly 400 candidates from dozens of political parties are participating in mayoral races in 85 municipalities, including Skopje.

Two-term Skopje Mayor Risto Penov, a 47-year-old Liberal-Democrat, is facing a challenge from opposition-backed businessman Trifun Kostovski, 58, in a campaign marred by corruption allegations from both sides.

But Macedonia's elections are as much about low living standards as they are about resolving ethnic divisions.

"The vast majority of people here see these elections as a test of the nation's democratic maturity," Pande Lazarevski, director of the Macedonian Institute for Social, Science and Political Researches, said.

# Germany wants to reduce its EU contributions

FRANKFURT, Germany — German Finance Minister Hans Eichel said in an interview released Sunday that he wants to reduce his nation's contributions to the European Union, citing the burden of paying for Germany's reunification.

Speaking to Focus weekly ahead of next week's EU finance ministers' meeting on the 2007-2013 budget, Eichel said that no country should have to contribute more than 1 percent of its gross national income to Brussels.

Germany is currently the third largest contributor to the EU.

From The Associated Press

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# China testing AIDS vaccine on humans

The Associated Press

BEIJING — China has begun conducting the first stage of testing of a new AIDS vaccine on eight volunteers, the government said.

The testing began Saturday, when the volunteers received physical checkups and signed waivers, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

A total of 49 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 50 will be part of the tests, to take place in three stages, said Xinhua, citing Chen Jie, director of the disease control agency in southern China's Guangxi region.

The first stage of testing will last 14 months, Xinhua said. It didn't say what the stage was meant to test, but said the second would cover the "immune nature and safety of the vaccine."

The agency didn't give any other details of the tests.

Chinese drug regulators approved the tests last November.

At that time, state media said the vaccine, already tested on monkeys, was developed by Chinese scientists who have studied the genetics of the AIDS virus since 1996.

China says it has 840,000 people infected with the

AIDS virus and 80,000 with the full-blown disease. But health experts say the true figures are much higher and warn that China could have 10 million people infected by 2010 unless it takes urgent action.

After years of denying that the disease was a problem, the communist government has become more open about its AIDS epidemic, though activists are still regularly detained and harassed.

In the world's biggest study of an experimental AIDS vaccine, Thai and U.S. researchers have been testing a combination of two drugs on 16,000 Thai volunteers since 2003.



Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, center, talks to his prime minister, Ahmed Qureia, on Sunday during a Fatah party central committee meeting in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Over the weekend, Hamas announced it will participate in the upcoming July parliamentary elections, challenging Abbas' Fatah movement, which has dominated Palestinian politics for four decades.

## Hamas says it will challenge Fatah in Palestinian elections

BY KARIN LAUB

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Hamas will conduct secret primaries to choose its candidates for parliamentary elections in July, the Islamic militant group's first major electoral test, a West Bank leader said Sunday.

Over the weekend, Hamas announced it is participating in the elections, challenging Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement, which has dominated Palestinian politics for four decades.

Hamas' decision to compete, coupled with its observance of an unofficial truce with Israel, is a major step in what some see as the group's gradual transformation into a political party.

Hamas is expected to make a strong showing in the election, but it remains unclear to what degree it will become involved in the Abbas government, including future negotiations with Israel.

Hamas, which has carried out scores of attacks on Israelis in more than four years of fighting, remains pledged to Israel's destruction. However, it has indicated

### Hamas, Fatah supporters clash at student rally

HEBRON, West Bank — Hundreds of student supporters of the militant Hamas group clashed with supporters of Mahmoud Abbas' ruling Fatah party, throwing punches, sticks and stones during a Hamas campaign rally for student council elections.

Hospital officials said at least nine people were injured, including an Agence France-Presse photographer who received five stitches in the head.

The massive brawl erupted when several hundred Fatah supporters at Hebron University in the West Bank started shouting their own party's slogans in the midst of a large Hamas rally. Harsh words erupted into a fight, sending photographers and cameramen at the scene running for cover.

Student supporters of the militant Islamic Jihad intervened, acting as a buffer and eventually ending the violent fight between the two parties.

From The Associated Press

ed it is willing to accept the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem as an interim step.

Later this week, leaders of Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups will meet in Cairo for what Abbas hopes will be a joint cease-fire declaration. Under Egyptian sponsorship, the participants will also try to work out a possible political partnership in the PLO, based on the results of July's election.

Mohammed Ghazal, a senior

Hamas leader in the West Bank, said in a telephone interview Sunday that the group would conduct an underground registration drive among members and supporters ahead of primaries that would also be held in secret.

Hamas did well in local elections in Gaza earlier this year, and there is growing concern in Fatah that it will lose its majority in parliament. Fatah has commissioned internal polls to determine the most electable candidate, and the movement's Old Guard has promised younger activists to hold primaries.

### Italy bombing

ROME — An explosion at a church in northeastern Italy during Sunday Mass seriously injured a 6-year-old child and raised fears that an unknown bomber active in the area had struck again.

Two other people had slight injuries.

Investigators said the cause of the explosion at the Roman Catholic church in Motta di Livenza was still unclear. However, the town's mayor said officials suspected the perpetrator was the "Italian Unabomber," who is believed responsible for a dozen explosions in the area over the past decade.

### Neo-Nazi march

FRANKFURT, Germany — Hundreds of Neo-Nazis marched through the streets of Frankfurt Saturday, marking the 60th anniversary of the Allied bombing of the east German city earlier this week.

City officials officially marked the anniversary with a memorial service on Monday, but church and other leaders called 500 peaceful demonstrators to march Saturday against the far-right extremists.

Roughly 300 neo-Nazis participated in Saturday's protest marking the March 7 anniversary of the 1945 bombing that destroyed 80 percent of the city and killed hundreds of residents.

### Portuguese inauguration

LISBON, Portugal — Portugal's new Socialist prime minister, an opponent of the U.S.-led war in Iraq, took office Saturday, promising to keep good relations with Washington.

Jose Socrates also said Portugal, which is strongly pro-European, might hold a referendum on the European Union constitution at the same time as local elections next October.

Portugal is one of Europe's poorest countries, and Socrates used his inaugural speech to remind the Portuguese of the efforts ahead.

Unemployment rose to a six-year high of 7.1 percent at the end of last year, and economic statistics show the country falling behind the rest of the European Union.

### 1 dead in Saudi clashes

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — A Saudi militant was killed and three others were arrested in clashes with police in the coastal Red Sea city of Jeddah, after Saudi security forces discovered a wanted militant hiding in a residential building, authorities said Sunday.

The shootout was the latest in a 2-year-old crackdown on Islamic militants by the Saudi monarchy, which has been struggling to put an end to suicide bombings and terror attacks on security and Western targets.

From The Associated Press

Coming Soon to

STARS AND STRIPES.

INTERNET SHOPPING GUIDE 2005

What you need to know to be a Savvy Net Shopper.

March 16, 2005







**Left: Marchers gather on the steps of the state Capitol in Montgomery, Ala. Above: The Rev. Joseph Lowery, a co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, appears Saturday.**

# Extension of Voting Rights Act urged

BY SAMIRA JAFARI  
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Black politicians must urge Congress to extend the Voting Rights Act, civil rights leaders said Saturday at the finale of the re-enactment of the Selma-to-Montgomery march that helped lead to passage of the law.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 "was the single most significant piece of legislation in the century," the Rev. Joseph Lowery, a co-founder of the Atlanta-based Southern Christian Leadership Conference, told a crowd of nearly 300 marchers at the state Capitol.

In 1965, no blacks held major office in Alabama, University of Alabama political scientist William Stewart said.

By 2001, there were more than 755 black

## Weeklong re-enactment of historic march ends

elect officials in Alabama, according to the most recent figures available from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Across the South, the number has grown from 70 to nearly 7,000.

The first voting rights march was halted at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma by state troopers and sheriff's deputies who attacked activists with clubs and tear gas on March 7, 1965, "Bloody Sunday."

A second march two weeks later was led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and had the protection of a federal court order.

Marchers went from the bridge over the Al-

abama River to the steps of the state Capitol in Montgomery.

The attack and the marches inspired passage of the Voting Rights Act, which barred obstacles such as literacy tests that were set up by segregationists to keep blacks from registering to vote.

Certain provisions of the Voting Rights Act, such as the use of federal examiners and a requirement for Justice Department approval of election law changes, will be up for renewal by Congress in 2007.

"I bring a message to all elected officials," said Keif Schleifer, 43, of Atlanta, who walked the entire 54-mile trek with about 50 other people this past week.

"We've marched from Selma to Montgomery to exercise our patriotic right. We are watching your every action. We are holding you accountable. We are not going away."

# Gridiron dinner features a comedy of errors by GOP, Dems

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush poked fun at himself at the press corps Saturday night and offered a new reason for overhauling the Social Security system.

Raising the name of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Bush said, "We have to fix it or Rumsfeld may never retire."

Bush noted — with a little help — the presence of a number of new Cabinet members attending the Gridiron Club's 120th annual dinner.

Turning to Vice President Dick Cheney, the president said, "Dick, maybe you can point them out to me."

Some of the press skits he had

watched earlier in a long evening were about steroid use in professional sports, but Bush said that in looking out at the press corps he was confident none of them were on steroids.

"Those are all natural bodies," he said.

Bush said anyone looking for a transcript of the evening's program should call Doug Wade, the longtime Bush family friend who recently made public tape recordings of private telephone conversations he had with Bush before he started running for president.

The president noted that former President Clinton was recovering from surgery and said that "when he woke up he was surrounded by his loved ones" — his wife, daughter and "my dad."

The former President Bush and Clinton have become something of an item despite their once fierce political rivalry.

Earlier in the evening, a woman pretending to be John Kerry's wife sang about how happy she is that he wasn't elected. Karl Rove revealed his successful strategy for winning President Bush a second term. Wanne presidential candidates pressed for advantage in the 2008 race.

It was as close to "Saturday Night Live" as Washington gets, as journalists assumed the personas of politicians in song, dance and wisecracks.

The Gridiron Dinner is a journalistic tradition in which, for one night, members of the Fourth Es-

tate turn the tables on the powerful people they report and write about daily. The Gridiron Club's motto is to "sing, but never burn."

In a nod to 2008, they parodied the White House aspirations of Republican Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska and Democratic Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico, featured speakers at the white-tie dinner.

Richardson compared the Bush administration's treatment of U.S. allies over the Iraq war to the NCAA basketball tournament.

"Sixty-four teams start and they're whittled down to just one," Richardson said in prepared remarks. "Kind of reminds me of what we've done with our allies."

# 4-year-old shoots 2-year-old brother

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — A 2-year-old was shot by his 4-year-old brother, who may not have known the difference between a real gun and a toy gun, police said.

The 2-year-old, who suffered a single gunshot wound to the temple, was in critical condition Saturday night at Ben Taub Hospital.

The shooting occurred Saturday afternoon at a home in southwest Houston.

Police Sgt. Cameron Grysen said the boys had been arguing when the 2-year-old threw a toy at his brother.

The mother thought the boys had returned to their room, but they had instead gone to her room, where the older boy took a loaded gun from the woman's purse.

"The 4-year-old was angry ... he went and got the gun, put it in his brother's head and shot the gun," Grysen said.

The mother told police she had the .32-caliber automatic to protect her family because of recent neighborhood burglaries, and that Saturday was the one day that she did not secure the weapon.

She could face criminal charges. Authorities said the 2-year-old didn't seem to understand what he had done.

# Up in the Western sky, it's not a bird or a plane, but a streaking meteor

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Dozens of residents in the Pacific Northwest reported seeing a bright streak of light as it flashed across the sky, startling witnesses from southern Oregon to the Seattle area, officials said.

Scientists said the flaming object was probably a meteor, and that it likely disintegrated before any fragments fell into the

Pacific Ocean.

"It was like a big ball of fire," said Sumner Jensen, who was in his living room Saturday night when he saw the flash of light outside his Portland home.

Michael O'Connor, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration's regional office in Renton, Washington, said he fielded numerous calls from people reporting they had seen a bright streak across the sky.

He said police, pilots and some air traffic controllers described it as "a green ball of fire with a long tail."

"It appears to have come down over the ocean," said Dick Pugh of the Cascadia Meteorite Laboratory in Portland.

He said the object flew over the Pacific Coast, streaking along from south to north.

Jim Todd, planetarium director at the Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, said

that if a meteor had entered the atmosphere during the day, it may not even have been noticed.

"It creates a bright contrast against the night sky," Todd said.

Last year, a meteor that appeared like a fireball was sighted over western Washington state.

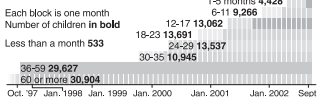
In March 2003, residents in four Midwestern states also reported seeing a disintegrating meteorite flash across the sky.



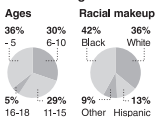
## The adoption wait can be long

There is a backlog of children waiting to be adopted and only 3.6 percent of adults who begin the adoption process succeed in adopting a child. Most of those adopting children are already relatives or foster parents.

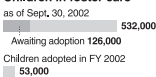
### Months children awaiting adoption have been in continuous foster care



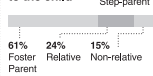
### Those waiting



### Children in foster care



### Adoptive parents relationship to the child



SOURCE: Department of Health and Human Services

AP

# Report: Unfriendly bureaucracy foils many adoptions

BY DAVID CRARY  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The backlog of children languishing in foster care could be sharply reduced if state agencies were more friendly and helpful to prospective parents asking about adoptions, according to a new report which says fewer than one of 16 adults who make initial inquiries actually ends up adopting.

The vast majority give up "not because they don't want to, but apparently because they decide not to deal with a system they perceive as too frustrating, bureaucratic and just plain unfriendly," the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute says.

The report urges state agencies to set up hotlines staffed by well-trained employees who provide callers with immediate, encouraging responses. Throughout the process, state employees should strive to avoid alienating applicants, be cordial in broaching the issue of background checks, and provide clear information, it said.

A preliminary version of the report circulated among adoption professionals last year, and already has had an impact. Barb Holtan, director of a new federal initiative called AdoptUSKids, said the findings prompted her program to form state recruitment response teams with the

goal of providing "basic good customer services" to prospective parents.

"We recruit and recruit (parents), and then when people call they're treated less than enthusiastically," she said Friday.

The report's lead researcher, Jeff Katz, formerly headed Rhode Island's state adoption agency. He and his colleagues surveyed more than 40 states, analyzed federal data and conducted interviews in Boston, Miami and San Jose, Calif.

"To me, it's shocking," Katz said in a telephone interview.

"There are kids in foster care saying, 'No one wants me' and there are parents who want to adopt saying, 'Why doesn't anyone return my calls?'"

“... there are parents who want to adopt saying, ‘Why doesn’t anyone return my calls?’”

Jeff Katz  
Lead report researcher,  
Evan B. Donaldson  
Adoption Institute

According to the latest federal statistics, from 2002, about 126,000 children were in foster care awaiting adoption, often for many years. Roughly 53,000 children were adopted from foster care, in most cases by their foster parents or by relatives; Katz said less than 6 percent of the 240,000 other adults who inquired about adoption ended up completing the process.

Katz said state agencies — rather than spending to recruit ever more applicants — should focus on making the process more welcoming, even during the necessary screening to weed out unsuitable parents.

# Sophisticated tactics aid Schiavo's parents

## Internet assists in fight to keep brain-damaged woman alive

BY MAYA BELL

The Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel

ORLANDO, Fla. — Fifteen years ago, two leaders of the anti-abortion group Operation Rescue walked into a motel in small-town Missouri and begged the night clerk for a fax machine.

At a nearby hospital, the parents of Nancy Cruzan were set to remove the feeding tube that had kept their daughter alive for nearly eight years. The activists were desperate to mobilize opposition to what they considered would be her murder.

"That's how sophisticated we were," remembers the Rev. Pat Mahoney, now executive director of the Christian Defense Coalition.

"We were desperately trying to get the word out, desperately trying to get people out. There just wasn't much interest."

Today, Mahoney is a leader of an informal but growing network of conservative, religious and disability organizations who, with the click of a computer mouse, are enlisting hundreds of thousands of people in Bob and Mary Schindler's fight to keep their daughter Terri Schiavo alive.

The feeding tube that has pumped life-sustaining nutrients into the severely brain-damaged Florida woman's stomach for 15 years is scheduled to be discon-



Bob and Mary Schindler, parents of Terri Schiavo, listen to supporters at a rally in Pinellas Park, Fla., on Saturday. With words of encouragement from actor Mel Gibson, the family of Terri Schiavo joined a rally Saturday to continue pleading for the brain-damaged woman's life, just days before the court-ordered removal of her feeding tube.

nected Friday under a court order won by her husband, Michael.

The courts have agreed with Michael Schiavo that his wife is in a persistent vegetative state, and although she never wrote down her wishes made it clear in casual conversations that she would have rejected artificial life support.

But turning to the Internet, alternative media and grass-roots organizations to spread their right-to-life messages, what Mahoney calls the "faith-and-values community" has unleashed an avalanche of support for Schiavo's parents.

That has prompted lawmakers in Congress and Tallahassee to file legislation on the Schindlers' behalf and ignited a national debate on the withdrawal of medically supplied hydration and nutri-

tion, drawing the likes of the Vatican, and on Saturday, actor Mel Gibson to their cause.

The first goal of the campaign, Mahoney said, is to save Terri Schiavo's life. But he and others also hope to roll back the laws and ethical and medical guidelines that have evolved since 1990, when the U.S. Supreme Court recognized artificial sustenance and hydration as medical treatment. That ruling eventually cleared the way for Cruzan's parents to remove her feeding tube.

Now, patients or their health-care decision makers in every state have the right to refuse or withdraw artificial feedings under certain circumstances. That is something many of those joining the Schindlers' campaign reject as immoral and inhumane, and a step down the road to legalizing euthanasia.

# Federal court upholds most FCC phone number-switching rules

BY GENARO C. ARMAS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal court on Friday upheld the bulk of Federal Communications Commission rules that allow consumers to keep their phone numbers when they switch providers.

The court said the agency needed to study further the impact of the new rules on small companies before the guidelines could go back into effect in those cases. The companies, which serve mainly rural areas, can still voluntarily switch home numbers to a cell phone.

One consumer group said the decision might affect companies that serve as much as 10 percent of the U.S. population, or more than 29 million people.

"We hope the FCC will go back and fill in the record and help consumers in small, rural markets

have the flexibility to take their numbers to the provider of their choice," said Gene Kimmelman, senior policy director at Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports magazine.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell said he was confident the agency would respond quickly to the court's request.

The ruling was one of two decisions from the appeals court Friday involving the FCC's number-switching rules. The court upheld the remainder of those rules.

Powell, who is leaving the agency this month, praised the decisions overall as "a big win for competition and wireless consumers."

According to the FCC, roughly 10 million cell customers have transferred their numbers to new providers since the rules went into effect in November 2003. Consumer advocates predicted the changes would lead to lower prices, better service and more options for phone customers. Many customers had been reluctant to switch service because it required changing numbers they had given to relatives, friends and business associates.

# g, gross! Disgusting exhibit proves popular

BY JOSEPH B. FRAZIER

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Freddie the Fly lays it out in terms dear to the adolescent heart: "My wife's cooking is so bad I vomit before I eat. But seriously..."

Freddie tosses off one-liners like the late Henny Youngman, all of them true. It's all about "gross" at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

Freddie, a huge animated model, is the star of the "Vomit Slurpers" exhibit in "Grossology: The Science of Creatures Gross and Disgusting." Freddie has grade-schoolers clustered around as he explains how he upchucks his digestive juices on a sandwich then sucks up his dinner. "Hey, soup and a sandwich..."

The display and more like it turn the gross into a teaching tool, often with indelicate candor. It's on a North American tour that winds up at Space Center Houston in June 2007.

"RETCH! Kitty hurls a warm hairy hot dog!" reads a display on feline hair balls that also gives a clear diagram of what makes Fluffy tick.

At the Dung-Bell Rally, a much-larger-than-life dung beetle (the Egyptians called them scarabs) boasts, "I can push a ball of poop 50 times my weight uphill." A video game challenges young stompers to see whose beetle can get his dung ball to the top first.

But there's a message here. A fly, the exhibit notes, can carry 1 million bacteria and any of 100 diseases; the dung bee-

tle is imported to Texas pastures and one can bury 1,000 pounds of cow droppings a year.

Exhibit visitors also learn that doctors were called "leeches" in Old English because they used leeches to suck the blood of patients they were treating. The practice is not totally dead.

The classrooms of kids who file through could watch it spelled out on the blackboard back at school. But this way, museum officials hope, they will remember. The classrooms of kids who file through could watch it spelled out on the blackboard back at school. But this way, museum officials hope, they will remember. The classrooms of kids who file through could watch it spelled out on the blackboard back at school. But this way, museum officials hope, they will remember.

Animal Grossology follows a popular exhibit of "Grossology: The (Impolite) Science of the Human Body" that toured nationally and broke many attendance records.

The human grossology display at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, which billed it as "Know Thy Poop," drew 400,000 visitors in three months, more than double any other springtime show it has hosted.

The grossology concept comes from Sylvia Branzel, a former science teacher from Port Roberts, Wash., whose five books on human and animal grossology have sold in the hundreds of thousands. Branzel said the target age is 8 to 12 but the exhibits try to accommodate everyone.

She said the idea came in 1993 when she was helping her two sons. "It literally hit me: 'What's



Susan Almquist, left, of Vancouver, Wash., and her children, Katie, 7, and Benjamin, 9, check out the display of a vomiting fly on top of a giant chocolate chip cookie at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in Portland, Ore. The display is part of "Grossology: The Science of Creatures Gross and Disgusting," the brainchild of a former science teacher designed to turn the gross into a teaching tool, which is on a North American tour winding up at the Space Center in Houston in June 2007.

that gunk made of? Kids like gross stuff. I wanted to teach them science. It was born right then and there."

However, Branzel, who stopped classroom teaching a couple of years ago, said she has

avoided the grotesque.

"I stay in areas that most people experience themselves. For example, I stay away from elephantiasis. It's not what most people experience. We make fun of ourselves, not just certain

examples."

And parents seem to like the show. "They'll tell me, 'Oh my gosh, my child loves science a lot.'"

She said an educational TV series may be in the offing.

## Texas OKs cupcakes in classrooms

The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Amid a tense education funding debate, Texas House members paused Wednesday to take up a matter dear to school kids everywhere: cupcakes.

Legislators in a unanimous recorded vote cleared the way for public school students to bring the sweet treats — complete with candy sprinkles — to celebrate their birthdays.

"We have an opportunity to really make the children happy here," said Rep. Jim Duntz, a Waco Democrat asking fellow House members to approve the measure requested by his school-age daughter, Lauren.

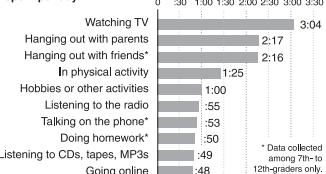
Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs, whose agency oversees the state's school lunch program, imposed new healthy food rules aimed at limiting or eliminating junk food and food that competes with cafeteria fare.

In August, soon after setting the new rules, Combs issued a "cupcake clarification" stating that cakes and cupcakes could be brought to school for birthdays. The agriculture department did, however, recommend that birthday parties be scheduled after the last lunch period.

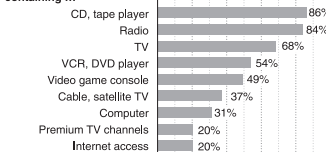
## Study finds media-saturated youth

A new study has found young people ages 8 to 18 have an unprecedented amount of media in their daily lives and surroundings, spending up to six and a half hours a day in media-related activities.

Average time 8- to 18-year-olds spent per day ...



Percentage of 8- to 18-year-olds with bedrooms containing ...



SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation

## Kids' rooms loaded with new technology

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It wasn't too long ago that a kid with a stereo and television in his room might have been the coolest on the block. Now, that just makes him one of the crowd.

In the past five years, many children's rooms have evolved into multimedia centers, with cable or satellite hookups, computers and video game consoles.

For instance, 20 percent of youngsters ages 8 to 18 can surf the Web from their bedrooms, double the figure from 1999, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey released Wednesday.

"That has helped turn kids into 'media multitaskers,' researchers suggest. Nearly one-third of kids say they chat on the phone, surf the Web, instant message, watch TV or listen to music 'most of the time' while doing their homework."

What effect this behavior has on the often fragile ability of kids to focus is unclear because detailed research is fairly new, said Vicki Rideout, the foundation vice president who directed the study.

Some of the blame — or praise — rests with the Internet and technology such as instant messaging, tools widely used for education and entertainment, said Lee Rain-

ie, director of the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Kaiser surveyed more than 2,000 third-graders through 12th-graders between October 2003 and March 2004 about their non-school use of TV and videos, music, video games, computers, movies and print. The study included nearly 700 people who kept seven-day "media diaries."

On average, kids devoted six hours and 21 minutes a day to recreational media use, an increase of just two minutes from 1999, the Kaiser study found.

That still amounts to over 44 hours a week — four more hours than a parent's typical work week.

But 26 percent of kids in 2004 said they "multitasked" when using any form of media, compared with 16 percent five years earlier. Over the same period the proportion of kids' homes that have two or more computers jumped from 25 percent to 39 percent, and the proportion with Internet access in the home grew from 47 percent to 93 percent.

The proportion of kids who had a VCR or DVD player in their room rose from 36 percent to 54 percent, while the proportion with cable or satellite TV in their own room grew from 29 percent to 37 percent.

# FACES

## From 'Sideways' to parting ways

Director Alexander Payne and wife Sandra Oh have gone from "Sideways" to parting ways, a spokeswoman told People magazine on Saturday. The Hollywood couple "have mutually decided to separate," the spokeswoman said. "They will remain friends."

The couple met five years ago and married in 2003. Payne wrote and directed "Sideways," the comedy about two friends on a wine-tasting road trip through California. Payne shared the Academy Award with his writing partner for Best Adapted Screenplay, Oh, a former co-star on the HBO series "Arli\$\$," was one of the stars of the film.



Oh and Payne

## Rocker says he's happy to be drug free

Velvet Revolver frontman Scott Weiland says he is off drugs for good, according to the April issue of Esquire magazine.



Weiland

Weiland, whose band won a Grammy last month, credits his sobriety of more than a year to seeing his second marriage crumble because of his addiction.

Weiland, 37, said his "preoccupation with catching a buzz" began in his early teens, when he began drinking liquor. He tried cocaine in high school and had moved on to heroin by the time he was 24 and touring with his previous group, Stone Temple Pilots, saying it made him feel safe and more confident about his music.

He said he was motivated to clean up his act and try to get his family back after two arrests in 2003—one for heroin and cocaine possession and the other for driving under the influence. "Right now, for the first time in my life, I'm finally happy," the singer told the magazine.

## Stewart's marriage proposal accepted

Rod Stewart has proposed to his longtime girlfriend at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Stewart's record company said Saturday.

Record label BMG said Stewart, 60, went down on one knee and proposed to 33-year-old Penny Lancaster at the French landmark on Wednesday. She accepted.

"I left it this long, because I wanted to get it right this time," Stewart said in a statement. "I've never been in a happier and more in love than I am today."

Lancaster's agent, Nicholas Young, said the couple would make wedding plans once Stewart's divorce is finalized. Rachel Hunter is finalized. The raspy-voiced singer was previously married to Alana Stewart.



Lancaster and Stewart

## PETA targets J.Lo's fur-wearing ways

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals wants Jennifer Lopez to "Get Right" when it comes to fur. Lopez introduced her Sweetface fashion collection during New York Fashion Week last month.

"Please don't support Jennifer Lopez or her bloody business," says a Web site — [www.jlown.com](http://www.jlown.com) — that the animal rights group has devoted to the singer, actress and now fashion designer.

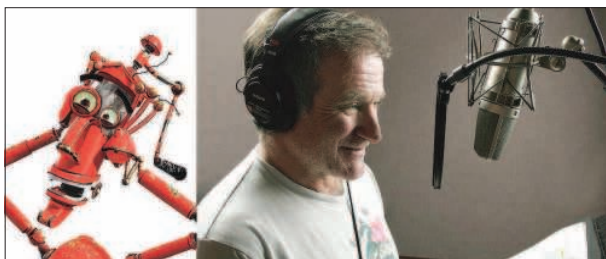
Calls seeking comment from Lopez's publicist weren't immediately returned Friday.

The site encourages visitors to "write to J.Lo and tell her that promoting the violence of the fur industry is a low-down, dirty, rotten shame."

"J.Lo knows what animals who are killed for their skins endure," the Web site reads. "PETA has contacted her with letters and videos no less than a dozen times. Lopez may try to convince her fans that her rabbit-trimmed jackets are a must-have, but what she won't tell you is that bunnies killed for fur coats scream as they are skinned alive!"



Lopez



Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

Robin Williams provides the voice of the animated character Fender in the movie "Robots."

# Robin Williams tuned in to 'toon role in 'Robots'

BY NANCY MILLS  
New York Daily News

HOLLYWOOD

In an ideal world, Robin Williams would have been born cartoon.

After all, merely human roles rarely give him the chance to free-assocciate, deliver dozens of accents and leap through his imagination the way no regular person ever does. And, let's face it, when he starts doing his slack offstage, he occasionally wears out his welcome.

With his outside personality, it's little wonder that Williams has a serious affinity for the animated world. He even took a stand for SpongeBob SquarePants on Oscar night, arriving with his mouth taped shut because producers rejected his plan to sing a satirical song about the undersea character.

"They tell me now that SpongeBob is gay," Williams said, referring to a conservative religious group's criticism that the "toon had a "pro-homosexual" agenda. "SquarePants is not gay," Williams told the Kodak Theatre crowd. "TightPants" may be. SpongeBob HotPants? You go, girl!"

When he took the role of the Blue Genie in 1992's "Aladdin," Williams crafted one of the most indelible characters in animation history.

But with "Robots," it's possible that Williams addicts will begin calling him "Fender." Fender is Williams' first animated role since "Aladdin." The red robot with a coffee-pot for a head may not look much like the 53-year-old comic, but they share a certain manic energy.

Fender is "a Skid Row bum, a man living hand to foot who puts the 'funk' in dysfunctional," Williams says. He also talks non-stop — sound familiar? — and keeps losing body parts to rust.

The performance makes use of Williams' hyperactivity without, as he puts it, "my having to train. Animators can create the physicality I could never get near."

"You get a bit of carte blanche," he adds. "I love doing the voices. I can play and create. You can't find too many parts that allow you such freedom — and it's easier to look at myself."

Since he could easily supply the voices for an entire cast of animated characters, cartoons could be Williams' main source of income, if he didn't love doing standup comedy and making live-action movies. Two of the latter will open this year, the coming-of-age tale "House of D" (opening next month) and a black comedy, "The Big White."

Later this year, he'll start production on two more. One is the drama "The Night Listener," based on an Armistead Maupin story. The other is "RV," a comedy Williams says is about "a blue-state guy traveling in a red state."

For "Robots," director Chris Wedge says all he had to do was turn Williams loose.

"We'd bring Robin ideas and script pages, and he'd very politely read the words we'd written," Wedge says. "Then he'd start lifting off. He'd hit on something and go off for 20 minutes. The glass in the booth would be full of condensation."

Although Wedge admits, "We were able to use only about 1 percent of what he created," they did manage to include his riff on "Singin' in the Rain."

And the eventual DVD outtakes will probably feature a sequence in which Fender's unattached right hand tries to romance his equally on-the-loose left hand — in a heavy Hispanic accent.

Set in a computer-generated world inhabited by mechanical people, "Robots" tells the story of idealistic young Rodney Copperbottom (voiced by Ewan McGregor), who dreams of being an inventor and sets off for the big city with his father's blessing. Naturally, his life does not go smoothly, even with Fender as a close friend.

Williams related to the follow-your-dreams scenario. "I loved the scenes between Rodney and his father because of my dad," he says. "My dad told me, 'Do what you want to do. I will help you. If you want to be an actor, that's great. Just have a backup profession.'"

"I actually went to one wedding class, and the guy teaching it had one eye because he lost the other in a welding accident," he adds.

"But my dad was good with support. Thanks, Dad."

As a father of three — Zach, 21, Zelda, 15, and Cody, 13 — Williams is trying to be equally supportive.

"Zach is studying linguistics right now," he says. "Maybe he'll open a syntax repair shop. Maybe he'll work for a few years and then study law."

"Cody has got a real dry sense of humor," he adds. "He writes very layered, intense poetry. And Zelda has the voices." She'll appear with her father in "House of D."

After some troubled years in which he fought through drug addiction and a messy divorce, Williams seems to be at a peaceful point in his life. Even he has noticed that his comic libido may finally be starting to ebb.

"My wife, Marsha, says that if more than two people come into a room, I go into a certain mode," he says. "But the older I get, the mode gets less like, 'Hello!'"

"It's tiring, but it's invigorating," he adds. "Drama is cathartic, but you feed off comedy. It builds you."

"And sometimes it works the other way. If an audience is not laughing, you'll feed off them — sometimes in an angry way, but sometimes in a challenging way. I can get these people. What is the key?"

"Only later you find out they're deaf."

## Fit on a flight

**AK** ANCHORAGE — A man denied alcohol during a United Airlines flight went on a rampage, breaking tray tables and other equipment, the FBI said.

Brian A. Casias, 35, has been charged with interfering with the flight crew on Flight 711 from Denver to Anchorage.

Casias of Commerce City, Colo., was heard swearing as he boarded the flight Tuesday, and the plane's captain advised him that he would not be served alcoholic beverages.

When a flight attendant denied Casias' request for a drink, he allegedly threw his tray of food down and spat repeatedly on the floor, the FBI said.

Casias allegedly ripped the back of the seat and broke two tray tables, throwing them to the floor, the FBI said.

Casias also is accused of urinating on the floor of the lavatory, where he allegedly broke a hand-capped bar and a changing table. He also is accused of swearing repeatedly and of smoking several cigarettes on the plane.

## Rapists drunk at center

**FL** ARCADIA — Violent sexual predators at a privately operated treatment center brew their own alcohol, wander around "staggering drunk" and often have brutal fights, state investigators found.

A report by the Department of Children & Families' inspector general portrays the Florida Civil Commitment Center as a largely lawless place where rapists and child molesters freely consume alcohol and brawl.

"All residents and staff interviewed admitted 'everyone' knows the residents make and consume homemade alcohol, called 'buck,'" the report completed last month said. "Two residents during the investigative interview admitted being intoxicated at the time."

## Foreign pledge protest

**MD** MILLERSVILLE — A ninth-grader is protesting his school's decision to broadcast the Pledge of Allegiance in foreign languages as part of National Foreign Language Week.

Patrick Linton said he and other students at Old Mill High School sat down rather than stand when the Pledge was read over the school's public address system in Russian. Linton's teacher told him if he had a problem he should leave the room.

He did, and did not plan to return this week.

"This is America, and we got soldiers at war," the 15-year-old said. "When you're saying the Pledge in a different language which nobody understands, that's not OK."

## Tour boats seized

**HI** HONOLULU — Two tour boats owned by Dream Cruises were seized by the U.S. Marshals Service because the company was in default of a \$1.4 million mortgage on the vessels, according to officials and court documents.

The American Dream in Kewalo

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Basin and its sister ship the Kona Dream in Kona won't be allowed to operate until court proceedings are completed, a spokesman for the service said.

Deputy marshals posted "No Trespassing" signs aboard the vessels while employees were allowed to remove personal belongings. About 75 employees are affected.

Dream Cruises President Michael Watson said he was surprised by the action. He acknowledged being a couple of months late on payments, but he said he was in discussions with the lender for a new payment plan.

## Teachers dropping out

**RI** PROVIDENCE — Nineteen members of the faculty at troubled Hope High School have told administrators they intend to transfer to other schools, according to Hope administrators and state education officials.

Another 55 faculty told a screening committee they intend to stay at the school, which had faced a state takeover but will undergo widespread changes instead.

Some of the teachers who indicated they'll transfer told interviewers they had tired of past reform efforts, according to Frances Gallo, chief of administration. Many cited poor attendance, transportation problems, lack of disci-

pline and scheduling difficulties.

## Girl stranded

**TX** DALLAS — A school bus driver accused of forcing a 5-year-old girl to get off the bus more than a mile from her scheduled stop was placed on paid administrative leave pending an investigation.

Jadian Anderson said the driver made her daughter, Syria, get off the bus after she complained that another student was hitting her.

"He did not leave her with another adult; he left her on the street," Anderson said. "He was very negligent, and he endangered my child."

Syria walked about a half-mile before a crossing guard saw her and noticed she was crying. While the guard was trying to figure out where she lived, a relative drove by, saw the girl and picked her up.

Dallas County Schools spokeswoman Deanne Hultender said that if the driver acted inappropriately, officials will "take the proper action."

## Dorm shower cam

**CT** HAMDEN — A Quinnipiac University student has been sanctioned for allegedly hiding a video camera in a dormitory shower.

University officials refused to name the student and would not say what the sanctions were.

The student was sanctioned after a story about the hidden camera appeared in the student newspaper, the Chronicle.

Doug Manners, a sophomore journalism major from East Longmeadow, Mass., reportedly discovered the camera.

Manners noticed something with red lights attached to a shower grate in the Troop residence hall on Feb. 6, the Chronicle reported. He and his roommate took the grate out of the ceiling and found the camera, which was connected to an adapter and electrical cord.

The two students brought the camera to the dorm's residential assistant, who called campus security. Officers confiscated the equipment and inspected other bathrooms in the dorm.

## DMV files stolen

**NV** NORTH LAS VEGAS — Personal information from more than 8,900 people was stolen when thieves broke into a Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles office, officials said Friday.

A computer taken during the break-in contained names, ages, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, photographs and signatures of southern Nevada residents who obtained driver's licenses between Nov. 25 and March 4 at the North Las Vegas office, state DMV chief Ginny Lewis said.

The DMV had previously maintained that the information on the computer stolen in Monday's break-in was encrypted, making it virtually useless to thieves.

But Lewis said Friday that Digital Corp., the Beaverton, Ore.-based company that provides digital driver's licenses in Nevada, told her Thursday the information was not encrypted, and was readily accessible.



**Watch out, coming through** Kate Pfeiffer tunnels her way out onto the street at the home of her grandmother, Valerie Pfeiffer, in Augusta, Maine.



**Husband on the run** Saad Mian runs from his wife, Sara, as she attempts to wallop him with a snowball during a family picnic at Menominee Park in Oshkosh, Wis.



## Getting the job done

Edward Oliver, who works for the Anderson Parks and Recreation Department, paints a trash can green at the Darwin H. Wright Municipal Park in Anderson, S.C.



**Winter fun** Taking advantage of one of the last days of their winter vacation, Kristin Korona, top, and Danielle LaMontagne, both of Londonderry, N.H., test out the sledding hill at Roby Park in Nashua, N.H.

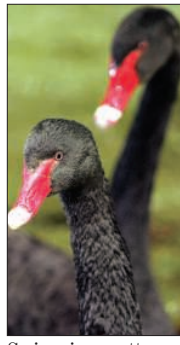




**Enjoying the view** Dick Droghei catches some air with his stunt kite at O.K. Ward Park in Chubbuck, Idaho.



**Bringing down the house** A bulldozer pushes together the remains of what used to be a two-room school in Ellis, Neb. Russ' Excavating of Beatrice knocked the building down after satisfying asbestos concerns raised by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, and the rubble will be burned and buried at a later date.



**Swimming pretty** A pair of black swans swim in an exhibit at the 134th annual New England Spring Flower Show, at the Bay Side Expo Center in Boston.



**Peaceful sunset** As the setting sun paints the sky, a cow and two calves walk high on a ridge near Belt, Mont.

## Anti-Bush road rage

**FL** TAMPA — A man apparently enraged by a Bush-Cheney sticker on a woman's sport utility vehicle chased her for miles and tried to run her off the road while holding up an anti-Bush sign, police said.

"He told our officers that he just got mad at her, so he went after her," said police spokesman Joe Durkin.

Nathan Alan Winkler, 31, was freed on \$2,000 bail on a charge of aggravated stalking, which carries up to five years in prison.

No one answered the telephone Thursday at Winkler's home, but his father, John Winkler, said: "I know that he's very anti-Bush. But I don't see him doing anything like that. He's the least aggressive person I know."

Fernandez was taking her 10-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter to a ball field when the incident occurred.

## Raise your right paw

**AR** BENTONVILLE — Prosecutors hoping for a witness in a murder case to roll over were barking up the wrong tree.

They sent out a batch of subpoenas for anyone who had contact with Albert K. Smith while he was jailed awaiting his murder trial.

One of those subpoenas went out to 5-year-old Murphy Smith — Smith's dog, it turned out.

The defendant had written his dog a letter from his cell, and that is how the shish tzu's name got on the witness list.

Prosecutors realized the mistake after the defendant's brother brought in Murphy to answer the subpoena and a deputy would not let them into the courthouse because no dogs were allowed.

Albert Smith is accused of shooting to death his ex-wife's boyfriend.

## Twins neglected

**NY** LAKE CARMEL — A set of malnourished 7-year-old twins whose existence was a surprise to neighbors and school officials were found in a dirty, unkempt home in Putnam County, police said.

The twins, Cassidy and John Giordano, who weighed 41 and 30 pounds respectively, were being treated for malnourishment and isolation at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla.

Their parents, Eda and James Giordano of Lake Carmel, were each charged with two counts of endangering a child and were released without bail. Their phone is unlisted and Town Court records did not show an attorney of record.

Chief Donald Smith of the Town of Kent police force, which covers Lake Carmel, said it had probably been several years since the children had left the house.

## Drug blamed in murder

**CO** DENVER — Nobody disputes that Danny Pommerville beat his 64-year-old grandmother to death with wine bottles last August, leaving her to die in a pool of blood and fleeing the state in her car.

But a defense attorney for the 24-year-old man told jurors that her client was in a PCP-induced

rage.

"He snapped. He flipped. The PCP kicked in," Deputy Public Defender Cynthia Mares said. "His grandmother was telling him that he was a loser and that he should be in prison the rest of his life, and he snapped. He doesn't remember most of what happened."

Pommerville is on trial on charges of first-degree murder in the death of his grandmother, Jane Mazza.

## Animal abuse sentence

**CA** RIVERSIDE, Calif. — The co-defendant of a former animal rescuer, who pleaded guilty in January to child-endangerment and multiple animal-cruelty charges, has been sentenced to 180 days in custody and four years' probation.

Marla Jean Smith was ordered to start serving her sentence on weekends beginning April 1. Smith helped former partner John Weinhardt operate the defunct Tiger Rescue sanctuary. State officials testified during Weinhardt's trial that they found one of the couples' children living in a home filled with trash and animal feces.

Officials also found malnourished tiger and leopard cubs in an attic, two alligators in a bathtub, two juvenile tigers in a patio and powerful animal tranquilizers, including PCP, in an unlocked refrigerator.

## Street taxi getaway

**UT** OGDEN — Police said it seemed more like a movie plot than real life when a taxi driver became the reluctant wheel in for a suspected bank robber's getaway attempt.

The hunt for Donald Archambault, 53, who was suspected of robbing a Salt Lake City bank, ended 30 miles north of Ogden. Archambault bailed out of the cab and was arrested by waiting police.

Cabbie Ali Ahmed didn't realize his customer was wanted until he got a call on his cell phone from a police detective.

Ahmed's fears escalated when the suspect allegedly told him "he would empty his gun" if Ahmed turned him in to police. The suspect didn't know that Ahmed was talking to a detective throughout much of the Interstate 15 ride.

## Gangsters get life

**DC** WASHINGTON — Six members of a drug gang dubbed "Murder Inc." blamed for dozens of killings in the nation's capital were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The group's leaders, Kevin L. Gray, 33, and Rodney L. Moore, 39, were convicted last year after an eight-month trial. Gray was sentenced Wednesday to 26 concurrent life terms, plus 285 years. Moore received 14 concurrent life sentences, plus 135 years.

Four men who were convicted last May also were sentenced to multiple life terms.

The Murder Inc. gang is believed responsible for at least 31 killings between 1982 and 1999 as part of a quest to dominate the District of Columbia's cocaine and heroin markets, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Stories and photos from wire services

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## OPINION

## Painful truth is, Bush's declaration untrue

Los Angeles Times

**P**resident Bush declared in his State of the Union address, "Torture is never acceptable, nor do we hand over people to countries that do torture." Considering what's come to light since then, the most charitable conclusion is that Bush is completely out of the loop.

In recent weeks, past and present administration officials have confirmed that since September 2001 the Central Intelligence Agency has dispatched between 100 and 150 terror suspects to countries where fine points of law and human rights don't stop beatings, drugging or long isolation.

Before the Sept. 11 attacks, the CIA occasionally engaged in this indefensible practice, known as "extraordinary rendition." But afterward, Bush gave the agency wider license to export prisoners in terror-related cases who hadn't been tried or even charged with any crime. Despite his State of the Union declaration, the president apparently has not revoked that authority.

U.S. law and international conventions bar sending prisoners to another nation where there are strong assurances of humane treatment.

The CIA says with a straight face that it gets those assurances before delivering suspects to jailers in Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Pakistan — countries that have such abysmal human rights

records that promises of decent treatment are a joke.

Bush has argued that tough new rules of engagement are necessary to fight stateless terrorists. But morality aside, what intelligence of value have U.S. officials gleaned from suspects who've been handed off to modern-day dungeons?

A case in point: In 2002, federal agents arrested Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian engineer, at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York because his name appeared on a terrorist watch list. Although Arar insisted that he was not a terrorist, the United States delivered him to Syrian interrogators. After months in a windowless room and regular beatings with thick electric cables, he said, he confessed to anything they wanted just to stop the torment. A year later, Arar was released without charges.

This barbarism is why U.S. judges have refused to condone the indefinite detention of terrorism suspects. Yet the military still holds about 500 foreign nationals at the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Most have not been charged and have no lawyer, often after years in custody.

Two American citizens have been held in military brigades. The evidence against U.S.-born Yaser Esam Hamdi was so flimsy that last year federal agents packed him off to his family in Saudi Arabia rather than present their case in court. This month, a federal judge ordered the administration to charge the second, Jose Padilla,

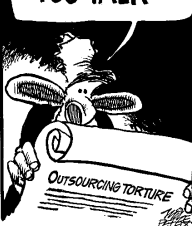
**WE'RE REWRITING THE FIRST AMENDMENT ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH TO READ...**



or release him within 45 days. Government lawyers say interrogations produced a lot about Padilla's activities, including his relationship with al-Qaida leaders and his plans to blow up high-rise buildings.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said last week he may still prosecute him. But because most of Padilla's disclosures occurred while he was in military custody,

**"...WE HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU TALK"**



without access to a lawyer, it's doubtful his statements would be admissible in court.

These are only the practical issues. The more haunting problem with Bush's war on terrorism remains the moral one: A nation that considers itself a beacon of freedom seems unable to practice the respect for law and human rights it ardently preaches to others.

## Contra-indicated: Ortega again in Nicaragua mix

**I**f you think the Bush administration has enough troubles in Latin America dealing with leftist autocrats in Cuba and Venezuela, consider this: A radical former revolutionary leader may be making a comeback in Nicaragua.

Andres Oppenheimer



Daniel Ortega, the former Sandinista president who after the 1979 revolution confiscated the mansion of a wealthy businessman in the name of social justice and immediately moved in, recently crushed a massive movement within his party to hold primary elections, and had himself declared presidential candidate for the November 2006 elections.

In Washington, Latin America watchers aren't amused: Ortega — in a rare power-sharing alliance with rightist former President Arnoldo Aleman, who is facing charges of illicit enrichment — already controls the Supreme Court, the electoral tribunal, the Comptroller's General office and Congress.

Although his negative ratings in Nicaragua are sky-high and his well-organized Sandinista party has historically had a hard time reaching out beyond its 35 percent hard-core support, Ortega could conceivably win next year's election.

"Right now, he is in a very strong position," a senior U.S. official told me last week. "All he has to do is run against a divided field, and he is in."

Unlike the leftist presidents of Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, Ortega has shied away from the radical 1980s rhetoric, and to what many describe as vintage Stalinist practices.

Late last month, Ortega staged an inter-

nal coup within his party, and expelled popular former Managua Mayor Hery Levites, who was mounting a challenge to win the party's presidential nomination.

Levites, who was tourism minister during the Sandinista regime in the 1980s and was elected Managua mayor in 2000, is the country's most popular politician.

A recent poll by Borge y Asociados shows that Levites would win a general election with 40 percent of the vote. Among Sandinista sympathizers, he gets 75 percent of the vote, with 18 percent for Ortega.

Levites called for a massive Sandinista rally March 6 to protest Ortega's internal coup, but Ortega had a sympathetic court deny him a permit to hold the demonstration. Levites is challenging the Sandinista expulsion order, and has accused Ortega's goon squads of trying to kill him in a March 3 incident in front of a court where he was summoned to appear.

When I called Levites last week, I got a message on his cellphone saying, "This is

your future president." In an interview later that day, he said his troubles with Ortega started recently, "when Daniel [Ortega] saw that the public squares didn't belong to him anymore, after our massive (pro-Levites) rallies in late February."

Ortega compared the popular ex-mayor with former Presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, who Ortega said had committed "crimes against humanity" by destroying the Soviet Union. Levites countered by charging that Ortega's hard-line backers had recently sold properties and made other business transactions worth more than \$3.8 million.

"Where did they get that kind of money from?" Levites asks.

"Facing these accusations, and knowing that I could prove them, they decided to shut up, and expel me from the party."

"This is a fight between an ultra-radical orthodox wing of the party, and a democratic wing," Levites says. "We're not denying that we will be a leftist government. But it will be a leftist government a la [Chilean

President Ricardo] Lagos, or [Brazilian President Luiz Inacio] Lula da Silva."

Ortega is paying a price for his refusal to hold primary elections. Top Sandinista leaders are now backing Levites.

"This is the most serious challenge Ortega has ever faced within his party," says Carlos Fernando Chamorro, a former Sandinista newspaper editor who publishes Confidential, a political newsletter.

Still, Ortega's ruthless tactics may pay off. While Levites is ahead in the polls, it's doubtful he could run a successful independent candidacy without the 500,000-member Sandinista party machinery.

My conclusion: If the conservative parties are stupid enough — or corrupt enough — to field several candidates, Ortega could win. Nicaragua's democracy is already being kidnapped by a rightist-leftist alliance of mafiosi, and the Bush administration could soon have a major new headache in the region.

Andres Oppenheimer is a Latin America correspondent for The Miami Herald

## Mallard Fillmore

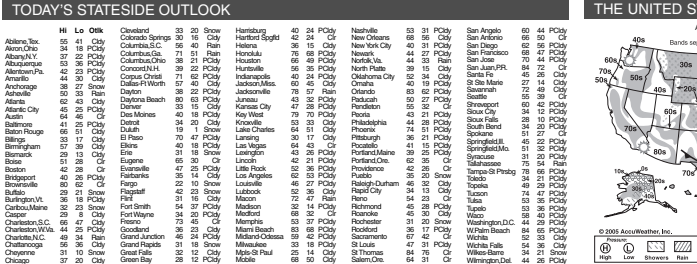
BY BRUCE TINSLEY



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KEY: Sunny, Partly cloudy, Mostly cloudy, Cloudy, Showers, Tornado, Rain, Rain/snow, Snow, Cold front, Warm front, Trough, Occluded, Stationary, High, Low



## EUROPEAN FORECAST

**Benelux:** Mostly cloudy with isolated rain and snow showers. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the 30s.

**Britain, Ireland:** Cloudy with isolated rain showers. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the mid-30s to mid-40s.

**Croatia and Bosnia:** Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid-40s to lower 50s. Tuesday lows in the 30s.

**France:** Partly to mostly cloudy. Highs in the lower 50s to lower 60s. Tuesday lows in the lower 30s to lower 40s.

**Northern Germany:** Mostly cloudy with rain and snow showers. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the upper 20s to lower 30s.

**Southern Germany:** Mostly cloudy with isolated rain and snow showers. Highs in the upper 30s to lower 40s. Tuesday lows in the upper 20s to lower 30s.

**Hungary:** Partly cloudy. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the upper 20s.

**Northern Italy:** Mostly cloudy. Highs in the upper 40s to upper 50s. Tuesday lows in the mid-30s to lower 40s.

**Southern Italy:** Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 50s to upper 60s. Tuesday lows in the 40s.

**Kosovo:** Partly cloudy. Highs in the 40s. Tuesday lows in the lower 30s.

**Norway:** Cloudy with rain and snow showers. Highs in the mid-20s to mid-30s. Tuesday lows in the mid-20s to mid-30s.

**Portugal, Spain:** Partly cloudy becoming cloudy with rain showers. Highs in the mid-50s to mid-60s. Tuesday lows in the mid-40s to mid-50s along the coast and in the 30s inland.

**Turkey:** Mostly cloudy with isolated rain showers. Highs in the lower 50s to lower 60s. Tuesday lows in the 40s.

For current weather watches, warnings, and 5-day forecasts go to the USAF Operational Weather Squadron home page at: <https://www.sembach.af.mil>

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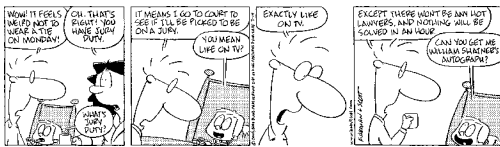
Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



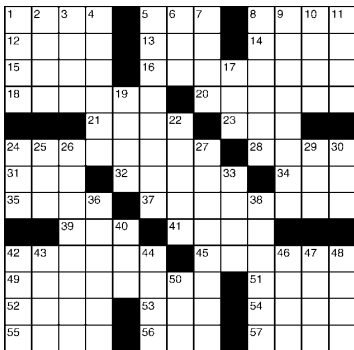
Hagar



Garfield



## Eugene Sheffer Crossword



## Across

- 1 Unit for Fermi
- 5 Chapel seating
- 8 Channel marker
- 12 Wash
- 13 Eggs
- 14 Arm bone
- 15 Begged
- 16 Gambler's escort?
- 18 Write illegally
- 20 Super Bowl XXXIX team
- 21 Ear-piercing
- 23 Shell-game item
- 24 Cole Porter's regretful one
- 28 Impale
- 31 Pismire
- 32 Underworld boss?
- 34 Bambi's aunt
- 35 Cozy and warm
- 37 Barry Humphries' alter ego
- 39 Bottom line
- 41 Unwanted e-mail
- 42 Off the right path
- 45 Audience's outcry
- 49 Porridge preparer
- 51 Historic times
- 52 Eternally
- 53 Caustic solution
- 54 Yale alumni
- 55 Fax
- 56 Starred
- 57 "Auld Lang —"
- 2 Aftershave application
- 3 Finished
- 4 Awards
- 5 Contaminated
- 6 Longoria of "Desperate Housewives"
- 7 Test the waters
- 8 Protrusions
- 9 Howled
- 10 Formerly
- 11 Tibetan herd
- 17 Tie-hole
- 19 Unfinished
- 22 Prima donnas
- 24 More, to Caesar
- 25 Hostel
- 26 Action-film workers
- 27 Had a silly smile
- 29 Massachusetts cape
- 30 Sheepish remark?
- 33 Slender
- 36 Actor
- 37 Depardieu
- 38 Hills
- 40 Bill
- 42 Iowa city
- 43 Rescue
- 44 Holler
- 46 Paris airport
- 47 Picnic spoiler
- 48 Existence, to Caesar
- 50 Sailor's assent

## Answer to Previous Puzzle



## Down

- 1 Austrian peaks

## 3-14 CRYPTOQUIP

ATY AN PQ OAPXFDYH  
 JYQI LXXYLHI DA KY  
 IDGOJGTS, KFD G OLC T'D

XFD PQ NGTSYH AT GD.  
 Saturday's Cryptquip: I SUPPOSE YOU MIGHT CALL THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF A ROBBERY THE COMMANDER-IN-THIEF.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: O equals C









Texas Rangers second baseman Alfonso Soriano, who hit .280 with 28 homers last season, is 0-for-16 in exhibition games this spring.

## Soriano struggling after lost offseason

Rangers 2B off to slow start in spring training because of recovery from left hamstring injury

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS

The Associated Press

**SURPRISE, Ariz.** — While Alfonso Soriano is at ease in the Texas Rangers' clubhouse this spring, he's off to a slow start on the field.

Soriano had to overcome the shock last spring of being unexpectedly traded from the New York Yankees to the Alex Rodriguez deal. This year, he's coming off a lost offseason because of a left hamstring injury.

"I have my winter in the Dominican, I do nothing, just think about my leg," Soriano said Friday. "Just nothing. I was running like three days, got scared, so I said I'm going to stop because I don't want to hurt myself."

So there was no running and no workouts for the All-Star second baseman until just before he arrived in Arizona for spring training 3½ weeks ago.

After being held out of the first two exhibition games, Soriano is hitless in his first 16 at-bats with eight strikeouts in five games. He went 0-for-3 with a strikeout in a 6-4 loss to the Los Angeles Angels on Friday, when he also made his first error.

"I'm not worried about it, because it's more important for me to try to be healthy and think about my leg," Soriano said. "I have plenty of time, three more weeks. I have plenty of time to get ready. ... I feel so great, I'm running every day."

Soriano missed the final 16 games last season after being hurt Sept. 16 as he stole third base against Oakland.

The team called the injury a strained hamstring, and it didn't require surgery.

Despite the slow start this spring, Soriano says he's not in pain. He insists that he'll be 100 percent by the season opener April 5 at the Los Angeles Angels.

The Rangers have no reason to think otherwise.

"I'd be concerned if he was having any pain," manager Buck Showalter said. "When he's through in the game, plays five or six innings ... he's running hard full speed down the line. It's more just kind of mentally getting over it, and getting over any residual effects of it."

Soriano wants to play every day, while Showalter is trying to rest his regulars a couple games a week.

That may be exactly what Soriano needs to getting going offensively. He hit .280 with 28 home runs and 91 RBIs last season.

"I don't know if he's behind. He was the same way last year," hitting coach Rudy Jaramillo said. "He just has to keep swinging, get his timing down and go from there. He doesn't look maybe like he's capable, but it's just timing."

At least Soriano is beyond adjusting to a new team in last place. Last spring, he suddenly went from a World Series team to one coming off four last-place finishes — before its improbable pennant chase.

"I feel now a big difference this year," Soriano said. "Last year, I came in a new guy, like a rookie. I now know the players, and we played together last year. I feel more comfortable."

# 'Lights Out Lidge,' ready for follow-up

## Reliever was surprise for Astros during playoff run

BY JOEL ANDERSON

The Associated Press

**KISSIMMEE, Fla.** — Maybe if Carlos Beltran had never come to Houston and Octavio Dotel had never gone to Oakland, Brad Lidge would still be just another promising reliever in the Astros' bullpen.

But with the Astros bumbling their way through a season that started with World Series expectations, Houston managed to pull off a three-team trade that landed Beltran and sent Dotel to the A's.

During the ensuing playoff push that got Houston within a victory of its first World Series, Lidge turned an unexpected audition for the closer's role into a four-month showcase for one of the best young pitchers in the majors. He converted 29 of 33 save attempts during the regular season, and was even better in the postseason, earning himself the nickname "Lights Out Lidge."

The question now is whether Lidge can do it for an entire season.

"When you strike out the world and close out the last three months of the season for us, you're not going to sneak up on anybody," Astros manager Phil Garner said. "All the teams know what he can do."

When then-general manager Gerry Hunsicker decided to swing the trade for Beltran last June 24, it was a huge gamble. Beltran was a free agent who would be seeking lots of money once the season was over, and dealing Dotel to Oakland would mean the unproven — and often injured — Lidge would become Houston's closer.

Hunsicker pulled the trigger on the trade anyway, a last-ditch effort to rescue the season of a team seemingly headed to a disappointing finish.

Good move, it turned out. Lidge might have been as good, if not better than, Beltran down the stretch.

"Beltran was already considered a great player," Garner said, "but not too many people knew about Brad until the playoffs. Then, they knew."

He led the majors with 17 saves after Aug. 15, and set an NL record for strikeouts by a reliever with 157. And once he was in the playoffs, Lidge took his game a step further, finishing with an ERA of 0.73 and 20 strikeouts — fourth most ever in the playoffs



Houston Astros pitcher Brad Lidge converted 29 of 33 save attempts during the regular season in 2004, and was even better in the postseason, finishing with an ERA of 0.73 and 20 strikeouts in 12 2/3 innings.

— during an amazing 12 2/3-inning run of dominance.

Against St. Louis in the NL championship series, Lidge pitched an NL-record eight scoreless innings against a team that led the league in runs scored. The Cardinals finished with only one hit and struck out 14 times against Lidge.

It was official: at just 27 and in his fourth month as a closer, Lidge merited comparison to his trio of idols — Mariano Rivera, John Smoltz and Billy Wagner.

"I'm just humbled by everything that happened to me," Lidge said. "I can remember those games like they were yesterday."

Lidge, 28, has only seemingly come a long way in a short amount of time. His road to the majors was repeatedly hindered by injuries and a deep pool of pitching talent in the Astros' organization.

"Brad always had the talent," said Wagner, a three-time All-Star who was the closer in Houston from 1995-2003 before

being traded to Philadelphia. "He's always had better overall stuff than anybody we've had or developed. He could throw things that most of us couldn't even get away with."

With a fastball that reached into the high 90s and a knee-buckling slider, Lidge had the kind of potential that allowed him to make a steady climb through the minors despite the setbacks.

Until his first full year in the majors in 2003, Lidge had every season ended prematurely by injuries: his right elbow in '98, right knee in '99, right elbow again in '00, right shoulder in '01 and a strained left muscle in his rib cage in '02.

Lidge had never pitched in relief until the 2003 season, when he was part of a strong bullpen that included himself, Dotel and Wagner. He went 6-3 with a 3.60 ERA, tied a club rookie record for games pitched in a season (78) and tied for fourth in the majors with 97 strikeouts.

**"When you strike out the world and close out the last three months of the season for us, you're not going to sneak up on anybody."**

**Phil Garner**  
Astros manager

# Wells makes first start for Red Sox

The Associated Press

David Wells made his Boston debut and began looking ahead to Opening Day.

Andy Pettite is still waiting to make his first start of spring training.

Wells worked two solid innings during the Tampa Bay Devil Rays' 6-4 victory over the Red Sox on Saturday, then said he'd be happy to start opening night April 3 against his former team, the New York Yankees, if Curt Schilling isn't yet recovered from offseason ankle surgery.

"I don't mind taking the ball in any game no matter what, especially a big game, and the first game of the season is going to be a big game," said Wells, who now wears No. 3, the same number one of his favorite players, Babe Ruth, with the Yankees.

Pettite was scratched from his scheduled start for Houston because of a sprained right ankle after falling down stairs at his apartment Friday.

"He's feeling pretty good today and it's not as swollen as we thought it would be," Houston manager Phil Garner said.

Pettite tested the ankle in a brief session at the Astros' camp Saturday morning. The 32-year-old left-hander is trying to rebound from an injury-plagued 2004 season that included three trips to the disabled list because of elbow problems.

"He probably could have gone a little longer, but we didn't want to push it," Garner said. "We'll have him another two sessions on Tuesday and maybe pitch him in a game later in the week."

After going through rehab for the past eight months, Pettite pitched three innings in a simulated game Tuesday.

Tim Lincecum replaced Pettite and struck out six in four scoreless innings to lead Houston to defeat the Cleveland Indians 7-3 in Winter Haven, Fla.

At Fort Myers, Fla., the

## Spring training

41-year-old Wells allowed four hits, one earned run and a wild pitch. He had no walks or strikeouts while throwing 28 pitches, 20 for strikes.

"My only job here is to go in here and win with the Boston Red Sox and try to give them quality innings and try to bring another championship to Boston," Wells said.

B.J. Upton hit a solo homer for Tampa Bay. David Ortiz hit a three-run homer and Trot Nixon added a solo shot for Boston.

In other games:

**Yankees 5, Phillies (ss) 2:** At Tampa, Fla., Hideki Matsui hit a grand slam and Jarrett Wright allowed three hits in three scoreless innings.

**Twins 4, Blue Jays 1:** At Dunedin, Fla., Carlos Silva threw four strong innings for Minnesota.

**Nationals 6, Marlins 3:** At Jupiter, Fla., Josh Beckett pitched in the finest performance by any Florida starter this spring, allowing four hits and one unearned run in six innings.

**Tigers 4, Braves (ss) 3:** At Kissimmee, Fla., Tim Hudson became the first Atlanta starter to give up a run this spring, allowing a homer to Carlos Pena.

**Dodgers (ss) 6, Orioles 0 (10):** At Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Sidney Ponson pitched four strong innings in his first spring start after his debut was delayed by a court case back home in Cuba.

**Mets 5, Dodgers 5 (11):** At Fort Beach, Fla., Kazuhiro Ishii made a strong case to rejoin Los Angeles' rotation, allowing one hit over four innings in his first start of the spring.

**Phillies (ss) 10, Braves (ss) 9 (10):** At Clearwater, Fla., Jim Thome hit a pair of two-run shots and Placido Polanco also hom-



Boston Red Sox pitcher David Wells delivers to Tampa Bay Devil Rays' Delmon Young during the first inning in Fort Myers, Fla., on Saturday.

ered for Philadelphia. Andy Marte homered twice for Atlanta, and Rafael Furcal also homered.

**Parasites (ss) 13, Reds (ss) 2:** At Sarasota, Fla., Ty Wigginton went 4-for-5 with two RBIs and Ben Grieve drove in four runs for Pittsburgh.

**Pirates (ss) 15, Reds (ss) 12:** At Bradenton, Fla., All-Star shortstop Jack Wilson went 0-for-2 in his first spring start for the Pirates but turned in several impressive defensive plays.

**Mets (ss) 3, Cardinals 2:** At Port St. Lucie, Fla., Matt Morris pitched two strong innings in his spring debut following offseason shoulder surgery, but Tom Glavine tossed four innings of no-hit ball for New York. Carlos Beltran hit his second homer for the Mets, and David Wright had a two-run double.

**Giants (ss) 2, Royals 1:** At Surprise, Ariz., Kansas City closer Jeremy Affeldt left with a strained left groin.

"It's not that serious," Royals manager Tony Pena said. "We don't want to take any chances. I did not hesitate to take him out."

Noah Lowry pitched 3 1/3 scoreless innings, allowing three hits and striking out five for the win.

# Report: Jeremy Giambi admits to steroid use

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Former major league Jeremy Giambi, who played one injury-plagued season for the Boston Red Sox, admitted he used steroids. The Kansas City Star reported Sunday.

"It's something I did," Giambi told the newspaper. "I apologize. I made a mistake. I moved on. I kind of forgot it in the past."

Giambi, the younger brother of Yankees star Jason Giambi, signed a minor league contract with the Chicago White Sox on Tuesday.

Jeremy Giambi broke into the big leagues in 1998 with Kansas City, then played with his brother in Oakland from 2000-01.

Jason Giambi won the AL MVP Award in 2000, and his younger brother had his best season the next year, hitting .283 with 12 homers and 57 RBIs in 371 at-bats.

The younger Giambi has also played for Philadelphia.

His last stint in the majors was in 2003, when he batted .197 in 127 at-bats with the Red Sox. He missed most of last season with a strained right disc. Signed by the Dodgers, he didn't play in a big league game.

While he did not specifically say his brother used steroids, Jeremy Giambi noted a news conference his brother had last month in New York during which he apologized profusely, but did not say why he was apologizing.

"If you don't know what he's apologizing for," Jeremy Giambi said, "you must've been in a coma for two years."

Jeremy Giambi declined to be specific about his steroid use. He told the newspaper he wants to come clean about steroids and hopes others will do the same.

"They're not good for you," the younger Giambi said. "I think we need to re-examine it and let teenagers know they're not good for your body and not good for your health."

It was the elder Giambi who introduced his brother to steroids, according to a transcript of the BALCO grand jury proceedings, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. When he testified before the grand jury, Jeremy Giambi said he used steroids in cream and liquid form and injected human growth hormone and testosterone.

The Yankees on Saturday declined a request by the Star to interview Jason Giambi.

In January, baseball adopted a harsher steroid-testing policy.

"Baseball has taken a step forward," the younger Giambi said. "People need to realize that and let it work. I wouldn't want to be the first one to get caught. It might be worse than a murder trial."

# Selig unhappy about congressional hearing

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS

The Associated Press

PEORIA, Ariz. — Commissioner Bud Selig is unhappy about the upcoming congressional hearing on steroids because he thinks baseball has already adopted a strong testing program.

The House Government Reform Committee has subpoenaed seven current or former players and four baseball executives to testify at the hearing March 17. The commissioner's office has said it will fight the subpoenas.

"I am very protective of the players, and there has to be a sense of fairness," Selig said Saturday. "If I sound a bit elevated, it is for that reason. We made agreements and we are doing the things we promised to do."



Selig

Selig said he's not sure what will be asked of the players who were subpoenaed. When asked what he felt the committee's motivation was, he defended the players.

"I'll let you all make that judgment," Selig told reporters during the Seattle Mariners' spring training game against the Texas Rangers.

Under pressure from Congress, baseball and its players agreed in January to a tougher steroid-testing program that added penalties for first-time offenders (10-day

suspensions) and random, year-round tests.

"It's an evolving policy. When we went to testing, it was called weak and toothless," Selig said. "But we started at 7 percent [testing positive], now we're down to 1-2 percent. I believe while the policy isn't exactly what I want, it's the best that could be done in collective bargaining."

"I'm comfortable and very confident in telling you that we will readily reduce the usage."

The previous policy called only for treatment after a first positive test. No player was suspended for steroid use in 2004, the first season of testing with penalties.

The players subpoenaed for next week's hearing are former stars Mark McGwire and Jose Canseco and current players

Jason Giambi, Sammy Sosa, Curt Schilling, Frank Thomas and Rafael Palmeiro.

Selig said he wasn't sure about any attempts by baseball officials to negotiate a deal with Congress that would excuse the players from testifying.

The commissioner, who addressed a Senate panel about steroids last year, was not subpoenaed, but said he was willing to attend the hearings.

"I'll do whatever is in the best interest of the sport, and if I believe that's it, you'll be I'll be there," he said.

Players' association head Donald Fehr, Major League Baseball executive vice presidents Rob Manfred and Sandy Alderson, and San Diego Padres general manager Kevin Towers have been called to appear.



# Edwards' flat allows Martin to add win 47

By TOM GARDNER

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Mark Martin moved into the lead when seemingly unstoppable Carl Edwards was sidelined by a flat tire, extending his record for Busch Series victories to 47 Saturday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

Martin picked up his second Busch win this season, following his victory at California two weeks ago.

Edwards, making just his sixth Busch start, shot away from the field after taking his first series pole and dominated for 125 of the 200 laps in the Sam's Town 300 until the right rear tire went down on lap 186, sending him spinning into the infield.

"I had a little luck today. Carl Edwards was in a position to take that one," Martin said of his Roush Racing teammate. "I was just lucky to get into the front."

"He was just checked out. There wasn't much we could do

about it. That one just slipped through his fingers."

Martin seized on Edwards' misfortune when his teammate's right rear tire failed.

"I knew Carl had a problem down the back stretch and I knew at that point the race could be on between [Stremme and me]."

As Martin swept to a 1.412-second victory — about 14 car lengths — Kevin Harvick and David Stremme battled for second. Harvick passed on the last turn of the final lap and edged Stremme by the length of his hood.

Joe Nemechek finished fourth and Greg Biffle fifth. Reed Sorenson was sixth, and Edwards worked his way up to seventh, despite the tire problems.

Stremme was handicapped in the late going by a cranky gearshift lever he had to hold while he was trying to steer the car around the 1.5-mile Las Vegas oval.

"It's pretty hard driving one-handed around this slippery track," he said.

# Els comes out on top again in Middle East

The Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — Ernie Els won his second straight tournament in the Middle East, rallying to take the Qatar Masters on Sunday by one shot after carding a 7-under 65 in the final round.

The third-ranked South African, who finished with a 12-under 276, fired seven birdies to come from a five-stroke deficit and edged Henrik Stenson of Sweden at the Doha Golf Course. Stenson shot a 71 on Sunday.

Richard Green of Australia and Pierre Fulke of Sweden tied for third at 9 under.

Els also won the Dubai Desert Classic last week.

**Ogilvy makes up eight strokes, moves into tie for lead**

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Australia's Geoff Ogilvy overcame an eight-shot deficit at the start of play Saturday, shooting an 8-under-par 64 to tie tie Brett Wetterich for the lead after three rounds in the Honda Classic.

Wetterich, bidding for his first PGA Tour victory, began the day alone in the lead but scrambled to a 72 and joined Ogilvy at 12-under 204.

Two-time U.S. Open champion Lee Janzen, seeking his first tour title since 1998, bogeyed No. 18 to fall out of a three-way tie for the lead. A round of 72 left him one stroke off the pace and tied with Pat Perez (67) at 11 under.

With the greens firmer than in the first two rounds and winds still strong, bogeys became more frequent on the long Country Club at Miramar course.

Ogilvy, who won his first title in 1992, Tour starts two weeks ago at Tucson, struggled to a 73 in the opening round but began to surge Saturday when he birdied



four of the first six holes. He also birdied Nos. 17 and 18.

"I just kept hitting nice shots and getting good putts," he said. "Maybe six months ago, sneaking right up the leader board deep on Saturday, I might have gotten a bit more nervous than I did. I was not being comfortable."

No. 2-ranked Vijay Singh, the lone player entered among the world's top six, shot 70 and was 6 under. Todd Hamilton, the champion last year, shot 72 and was 4 under.

Wetterich and Janzen, playing in their final twosome, swapped the lead three times early. They struggled on the back nine, where most of the holes went into the wind, and slipped back to Ogilvy on the leader board.

## Fergus leads SBC Classic after 7-under 65

SANTA CLARITA, Calif. — Keith Fergus shot a 7-under 65 to take a one-stroke lead over Mark McNulty after two rounds of the Champions Tour's SBC Classic.

The 51-year-old Fergus, a former golf coach at Houston and three-time winner in 14 years on the PGA Tour, had six birdies and a bogey on the Valencia Country Club course for a 7-under 137 total.

McNulty shot a 66 to move to 138, two strokes ahead of Gary McCord (66) and D.A. Weirberg (69). Mike Reid was in fifth place at 141 after a second-round 71, and 72-year-old Larry Rasmussen, the first-round leader, followed an opening 69 with a 73, dropping to 142.



Bode Miller, left, and Anja Paerson show their World Cup overall trophies after the final event on Sunday.

# Paerson hangs on to overall title Swede edges Kostelic by three points

By ERICA BULMAN

The Associated Press

LENZERHEIDE, Switzerland — Sweden's Anja Paerson held off Croatia's Janica Kostelic to win the overall World Cup title Sunday in a competition that came down to the final skier in the final race of the season.

"Janica and I were both standing there in the finish, and we weren't sure who was going to win," Paerson said. "That's the way it ski racing should be." Finland's Tanja Poutiainen, who already had clinched the slalom championship, captured the giant slalom title.

Spain's Marie Jose Rienda Contreras, the last skier of the day, won the final giant slalom in 2 minutes, 20.18 seconds. Poutiainen was second in 2:20.48, and Nicole Hosp of Austria was third in 2:20.69.

Paerson won the championship by three points after entering the race with a 35-point lead over Kostelic in the overall standings.

She would have automatically won the title by finishing ahead

of the Croat. But Kostelic was eighth and Paerson 17th.

Kostelic and Paerson hugged after the race, and then Kostelic kissed her Swedish rival on the cheek before pushing her into the center of the finish area.

"Maybe we're not best friends, but we appreciate each other as skiers," Paerson said. "I admire her. We're both great skiers."

The Swede seemed on track to retain her overall title in the opening leg, finishing ahead of Kostelic, but things got tricky for Paerson in the second run.

Kostelic managed another strong performance in the second leg, crossing fourth. Paerson, running next, was uncharacteristically slow in her favorite discipline, finishing just within the points in 13th place with four racers to go.

Kostelic could have secured the title by finishing seventh or higher as last Paerson fell out of the top 15. At the World Cup finals, only the top 15 finishers score points.

With one skier left, Kostelic was seventh and Paerson was al-

ready out of the top 15. But Rienda Contreras delivered a sizzling final run — overcoming a mistake where she went wide — to win the race and give Paerson the overall title by bumping Kostelic to eighth.

Paerson finished the season with 1,359 overall points, followed by Kostelic with 1,356. In the men's final event on Sunday, Austria's Mario Matt won the slalom — his first victory in more than four years — and newly crowned overall champion Bode Miller completed a slalom for just the second time this season.

Matt, the 2001 world champion, maintained his lead from the first run to complete the sun-drenched course in a combined time of 1 minute, 22.81 seconds. He was fastest in the opening run and third in the second.

Alois Vogl of Germany was second in 1:23.54 and Rainer Schönböck of Austria was third in 1:23.55.

Miller finished in sixth place. He was 13th after a mistake in the opening leg but delivered a blistering second run.

# Vikings sign ex-Packer Sharper

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Vikings signed veteran safety Darren Sharper to a four-year contract on Saturday.

Sharper, cut by the Green Bay Packers in a cost-cutting move last week, started at free safety the past six seasons and ranks fifth in team history with 36 interceptions. He led the team with four interceptions last year and scored three defensive touchdowns.

"Darren is very excited to be going to Minnesota," agent Joel Segal told The Associated Press.

The Packers tried to get Sharper to restructure his deal, but he balked at a pay cut, hoping he could make more on the open market than the approximately \$2 million Green Bay was offering for 2005.

The Vikings were only too happy to have him fall

into their laps.

"He's a great playmaker and has been a nemesis of ours for years," Vikings vice president of football operations Rob Brzezinski said. "He's an outstanding leader and will be a tremendous addition to our defense."

## BC player injured during raid on home

BOSTON — Boston College guard Jermaine Watson jumped from a second-story window to escape gun-toting masked men who burst into his off-campus apartment, police said.

Watson cut his ear and left hand early Saturday. He sat out practice that day but coach Al Skinner expected the senior to return to the court Sunday in preparation for the NCAA tournament.

"He said he's OK and he wants to play," Skinner said.

There were no arrests in connection with the raid, which appeared to stem from a dispute during a party at Watson's apartment.

## Sports briefs



# 'Happy birthday, coach'

## Oklahoma St. gives Sutton a victory over Kansas

BY DOUG TUCKER

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The first day of Eddie Sutton's 70th year will produce a coaching matchup for the ages.

Joey Graham scored 25 points, four on free throws in the final 41.4 seconds, as Oklahoma State marked Sutton's 69th birthday with a 78-75 victory over No. 9 Kansas in the Big 12 tournament semifinals.

In the Big 12 title game on Sunday, it'll be Sutton, with 778 victories, against Texas Tech's Bob Knight, who's won 852 games in a Hall of Fame career.

"I have had a lot of disappointments on my birthday," said Sutton, who was serenaded by fans' shouts of, "Happy birthday!" "Today is not one of those days. I had a good 69th."

The No. 10 Cowboys shot 57 percent in the second half to the 64 percent of Kansas, which got 30 points from Wayne Simien, the Big 12 player of the year.

"It's tough when the Big 12 tournament is your goal as a freshman and you don't get a chance to cut down the nets," the 6-foot-8 senior said.

Graham, who set a Big 12

record this season by hitting 39 foul shots in a row, sank two to give the Cowboys a three-point lead with 10 seconds left. Then Alex Galindo missed a long three-pointer at the buzzer.

"It was a set play," said Aaron Miles, the senior point guard for Kansas (23-6). "I knew they would be on J.R. (Giddens) tight. Galindo got the shot but it didn't go in."

Besides the right to meet Texas Tech in the title game, the teams may have been playing for the right to go to Oklahoma City next week for the opening round of the NCAA tournament. It's the closest first-round site for either school and an easy drive for fans.

"I would be disappointed if we don't go to Oklahoma City," Sutton said. "We have gone East 11 of the last 12 times."

Kansas coach Bill Self, an Oklahoma native, was still hopeful.

"We should both be there," he said. "But whether or not it plays out that way I don't know because they might put [Oklahoma] there, too. I don't think they'll put all three of us there."

The Cowboys (23-6) missed 12 of their first 14 shots but then got hot and took the lead for good when Daniel Bobik stole the ball

on Kansas' end of the court and drove for a layup that made it 60-59.

James On Curry had 12 points for the Cowboys and John Lucas, Bobik and Ivan McFarlin each had 11.

Graham, fouled deliberately with 41.4 seconds left, hit both foul shots for a 75-70 lead. Simien answered with a soft, feathery hook shot and shaved the lead back to three.

Lucas, fouled with 22.8 seconds to go, hit one of two and the Cowboys led 76-72 until Giddens sank the Jayhawks' fifth straight three-pointer.

With 11.8 seconds to go and a one-point lead, the Cowboys inbounded the ball to Graham, who was fouled immediately.

**Texas Tech 69, No. 17 Oklahoma 63:** Ronald Ross scored 28 points and Jarriss Jackson scored 22, both career highs, to help Texas Tech (20-9) reach its first Big 12 tournament final. Terrell Everett led the top-seeded Sooners (24-7) with 15 points.

The Red Raiders drew 27 fouls and shot 24-for-33 from the line, outperformed by Oklahoma's 11-for-19. Ross was 10-for-11 and was perfect until he missed the front end of a two-shot foul in the closing seconds.



Oklahoma State's John Lucas, left, and Jeff Johnson, right, jump for joy after the Cowboys' 78-75 victory over Kansas in a semifinal game of the Big 12 tournament. OSU faces Texas Tech in the final.

# No. 1 Illini make sure to win one for Weber

BY JIM PAUL

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Illinois had its 14-point lead shaved to two with 6 minutes to go. But the top-ranked Illini weren't going to let this game slip away.

They wouldn't add a loss to coach Bruce Weber's tragic week-end.

Illinois (31-1) held Minnesota without a field goal for the final 4:05 on the way to a 64-56 victory Saturday and a trip to the Big Ten tournament championship game for the third straight season. The Illini will face Wisconsin, a 59-56 winner over Iowa.

The Illini also tied a school record for victories, matching the mark set by the 1988-89 Flyin' Illini team that went to Final Four.

"We say we're a family. That's what we emphasized all year," said forward James Augustine, who was the first to put an arm around his coach after the game. "We're with him."

Weber coached the game less than 24 hours after his mother, 81-year-old Dawn Weber, died at a Chicago hospital following emergency heart surgery. "He said he never doubted he'd be on the sideline."

"I'm proud of the kids and happy to be back in the championship game," Weber said. "I don't want to be the story. The kids have got to be the story."

The Illini played with emotion on their jerseys in memory of Dawn Weber, and the emotional drama showed early in what became a somewhat sloppy performance. They committed a season-high 23 turnovers and shot just 36 percent from the field.

"We were probably feeling a little too emotional," said Luther Head, who led Illinois with 14 points. "We're feeling the same way he [Weber] is."

The Illini got going midway through the half and took a 14-13 lead on the first of Head's four three-pointers. A 14-0 run turned a 13-8 deficit into a 22-13 lead and Illinois led 30-26 at halftime.

Head's fourth three-pointer put the Illini ahead 40-35 with 12 minutes left. But Illinois missed its next four shots and committed three turnovers, allowing Minnesota to get on a 16-4 run.

Vincent Grier and Aaron Robinson scored all 16 points.

Deron Williams broke Illinois' drought with a three-pointer, but Robinson missed a three-pointer and Grier dunked to make it 53-51.

Roger Powell Jr. converted a three-point play that pushed the Illini lead back to five, but the players managed just three free throws down the stretch.

**No. 23 Wisconsin 59, Iowa 56:** Alando Tucker banked in the biggest shot of Wisconsin's season, hitting a running three-pointer at the buzzer to stun Iowa.

Tucker finished with 20 points on 7-for-12 shooting and Zach Morley added 17 for the Hawkeyes (22-7). Greg Brunner led Iowa (21-11) with 18 points.

# Thanks to Hayes, Kentucky in SEC final

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Chuck Hayes threw his arms in the air and let out a scream. Tubby Smith pumped his fist furiously as he ran along the sideline. Kentucky usually takes the Southeastern Conference tournament in stride, but the Wildcats couldn't contain themselves.

This one was worth celebrating.

Hayes spun into the lane to hit the winning shot with 7.9 seconds left in overtime Saturday, giving the No. 4 Wildcats a 79-78 victory over LSU and a chance to play for another SEC tournament title.

"Certainly, it gives us the belief that we can win close games," said Smith, the Wildcats' coach. Brandon Bass hit a miraculous

shot for the Tigers as the buzzer sounded in regulation, forcing overtime with the score tied at 70.

LSU built a five-point lead in the extra period, but it wasn't enough to hold off the Wildcats and the weight of history.

Kentucky (25-4) will be going for its third straight SEC tournament title, its 11th in 14 years and 26th overall. LSU (20-9) has won it only once, way back in 1980.

After its last two championship games, the Wildcats didn't even bother cutting down the nets. They may call for the scissors if they beat Florida on Sunday — especially with the way they survived the semifinals.

Patrick Sparks hit a crucial three-pointer from the corner to spark the Kentucky comeback, which was helped along when

LSU's Glen Davis missed two free throws with 39 seconds left.

Kelenna Azubuike, who led the Wildcats with 19 points, drew a foul and made the first of two free throws to pull Kentucky to 78-77. When the second attempt clanked off the rim, Hayes swooped in to grab the offensive rebound.

Kentucky called timeout and set up a play for its senior leader, even though he had made only 2 of 9 shots. The Wildcats worked the ball inside to Hayes, who spun around the 300-pound Davis and banked in a shot with his left hand.

"The whole game I had been pausing to see what the defense was going to do," Hayes said. "But that time, I just told myself to make a quick move, get it up on the rim and give it a chance to go in."

Sparks set a crucial pick that gave Hayes room to operate around the massive Davis.

"I should have felt the screen," the LSU freshman said. "I should have felt the pick and gotten over there."

The Tigers still had time, but Tack Minor drove wildly into the lane and lost the ball while trying to put up the shot. Appropriately, Hayes grabbed it as the horn sounded to send the Wildcats to the title game against Florida.

"Chuck is the key and the glue," Smith said.

Nearly everyone in the Georgia Dome crowd of 24,214 was wearing blue.

"This Kentucky following is amazing," LSU coach John Brady said. "For our team to come in here and play well in this environment has to help our team out, even in losing."

**Florida 68, No. 20 Alabama 62:** David Lee scored 20 points and Matt Walsh hit six free throws in the final 17 seconds as Florida held on to reach the championship game for the second straight year.

Walsh finished with 17 points, Anthony Robinson had 13 and Brewer added 10 for Florida (22-7). Kennedy Winston led Alabama (24-7) with 19 points.

Florida faced its own history as well as Kentucky in Sunday's final. The Gators have never won the SEC tournament, losing four times in the final — including 89-73 to Kentucky last year.

Then again, Florida did beat Kentucky in the regular-season finale last weekend, pulling off a 53-52 upset in Gainesville, Fla.

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# Georgia Tech victory 'too upset'

## Yellow Jackets top Heels, to face Duke in ACC final

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rashad McCants followed the North Carolina teammates through the tunnel toward the locker room, wearing a stunned look while biting the front of his white jersey.

The second-ranked Tar Heels had just lost 78-75 to Georgia Tech in the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament semifinals Saturday after McCants missed a three-pointer that would have forced overtime.

The junior guard let out a groan and let the jersey fall from his teeth.

"You know," he said with a sigh, "that was supposed to go in."

The top-seeded Tar Heels were supposed to win their first ACC title since 1998, but that didn't happen, either.

Will Bynum scored a career-high 35 points, and the fifth-seeded Yellow Jackets advanced to the ACC championship game Sunday against Duke with a stunning upset of the league's regular-season champions.

Did somebody say upset?

"This was no upset out here today. I want to make that point clear," Georgia Tech coach Paul Hewitt said. "These are two great teams, and our team, being a team that I think has accomplished a lot at

big moments ... to be written off was kind of amusing to me."

After Bynum capped his magnificent performance by making two foul shots with nine seconds left, McCants' three-point try bounced off the front of the rim and into the waiting arms of Tech's Jarred Jack, who clutched the ball until time expired.

The Yellow Jackets celebrated, but with a good measure of restraint.

"It's not a surprise, it's not a shock to us," Jack said. "We knew we could come in here and compete with any team in our conference, as well as any team in the country."

Thanks to Bynum, whose 35 points is the most by a Georgia Tech player in the ACC tournament, surpassing the 33 by Mark Price against Virginia in 1983.

"It was big, but I would rather have scored two and won anyway," a teary-eyed Bynum said at the postgame news conference. "As long as we get the win, that's what counts."

At that point, Hewitt interjected, "It was fun watching the 35, I'll tell you."

Georgia Tech, which lost to North Carolina by 22 during the regular season, will play for the league title against fifth-ranked Duke, which beat North Carolina State 76-69 in the other semifinal.

J.J. Redick carried the Blue Devils to their seventh consecutive final with a spectacular individual effort, making seven three-pointers and scoring 35 points.

A day earlier, Redick missed 11 of his first 12 shots and finished 4-for-17 against Virginia, but his teammates picked up the slack. Their efforts certainly were appreciated in this one, even if Redick needed little help.

"Just having the mentality to take the next shot," he said. "I didn't really dwell on it. I was 4-for-17. I knew eventually my shots would help."

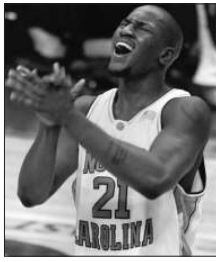
He surpassed Ronnie Meyer's previous school record of 34 points for an ACC tournament game, set in the 1955 semifinals.

"J.J.'s performance was one of the best ever," Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

Redick made the most of a quick reminder from his coach to score at least 30 points for the fourth time this season.

"Coach just talked to me about thinking of whoever is guarding me," Redick said. "To set my shot up before I ever took it. I did that."

Shelden Williams added 15 points and Daniel Ewing had 14 for the third-seeded Blue Devils, who held on despite missing six free throws in a row down the stretch.



North Carolina's Javawn Williams reacts after Tar Heels lost to Georgia Tech.

The Wolfpack (19-13) couldn't take advantage. Ilian Evtimov and Engin Atsura each missed three in the final minute that would have cut the deficit to three, and N.C. State was left hoping its spirited effort during the first two days was enough to secure an at-large bid to the NCAA tournament.

"I think we proved some people wrong this tournament," guard Cameron Bennerman said. "It feels good to perform well. For me, it's a hard pill to swallow right now, because I thought we could have won. But I'm trying to put it behind me and see what we have for the NCAAAs."

### Conference tournaments

#### America East

Championship  
Saturday  
Vermont 80, Northeastern 57

#### Atlantic Coast

Friday  
North Carolina 83, Virginia Tech 54  
C. Tech 64, Wake Forest 65  
Duke 76, Virginia 64  
Saturday  
Georgia Tech 78, North Carolina 75  
Duke 75, N.C. State 69  
Sunday  
Georgia Tech vs. Duke

#### Atlantic 10

Friday  
Saint Joseph's 73, Xavier 68  
George Washington 77, Temple 58  
Championship  
Saturday  
George Washington vs. Saint Joseph's 67

#### Big East

Friday  
West Virginia 78, Villanova 76  
Syracuse 67, Connecticut 63  
Championship  
Saturday  
Syracuse 68, West Virginia 59

#### Big Ten

Friday  
Illinois 68, Northwestern 51  
Minnesota 71, Indiana 55  
Iowa 77, Michigan State 69  
Wisconsin 60, Ohio State 49  
Saturday  
Illinois 64, Minnesota 56  
Wisconsin 59, Iowa 56  
Sunday  
Illinois vs. Wisconsin

#### Big 12

Friday  
Oklahoma 83, Missouri 79  
Texas Tech 64, Iowa State 56  
Texas 67, Kansas State 56  
Oklahoma State 67, Colorado 85  
Saturday  
Texas Tech 69, Oklahoma 63  
Oklahoma State 78, Kansas 75  
Sunday  
Texas Tech vs. Oklahoma State

#### Big West

Friday  
Pacific 63, Cal State Northridge 61  
Utah State 84, Cal State Fullerton 77  
Saturday  
Utah State 65, Pacific 52

#### Conference USA

Friday  
Louisville 74, Alabama-Birmingham 64  
Memphis 81, South Florida 75  
Championship  
Saturday  
Louisville 75, Memphis 74

#### Mid-American

Friday  
Ohio 63, Miami (Ohio) 52  
Buffalo 75, Western Michigan 68  
Championship  
Saturday  
Ohio 80, Buffalo 79 (OT)

#### Mid-Eastern Athletic

Friday  
Delaware 51, South Carolina 54, 48  
Hampton 62, Coppin State 50  
Saturday  
Delaware State 55, Hampton 53

#### Mountain West

Friday  
Utah 73, UNLV 67  
New Mexico 77, San Diego State 67  
Championship  
Saturday  
New Mexico 60, Utah 56

#### Pacific-10

Friday  
Arizona 90, Oregon State 59  
Washington 66, Stanford 63  
Championship  
Saturday  
Washington 81, Arizona 72

#### Patriot League

Friday  
Bucknell 61, Holy Cross 57

#### Southeastern

Friday  
Alabama 69, Mississippi 52  
Florida 80, Mississippi State 64  
Tennessee 62  
LSU 89, Auburn 58  
Saturday  
Florida 68, Alabama 62  
Kentucky 79, LSU 78, OT  
Sunday  
Florida vs. Kentucky

#### Southland

Championship  
Sunday  
SE Louisiana at Northwestern State

#### Southwestern Athletic

Friday  
Alabama State 54, Southern U. 59  
Alabama A&M 54, Jackson State 56  
Championship  
Saturday  
Alabama State vs. Alabama A&M

#### Western Athletic

Friday  
Texas El Paso 85, Rice 77  
Boise State 86, Fresno State 85  
Championship  
Saturday  
Texas El Paso 91, Boise State 78

## New Mexico no longer on bubble

The Associated Press

DENVER — The selection committee can stop worrying about New Mexico. A lot of NCAA tournament teams out there probably ought to start, though.

The Lobos made their invitation to the NCAA's a formality Saturday night, getting 25 points, 11 rebounds and four straight clutch free throws from Danny Granger in a 60-56 victory over No. 15 Utah in the Mountain West Conference championship game.

Playing as though their season was at stake — even though it probably wasn't by this point — the second-seeded Lobos (26-6) jumped on Andrew Bogut and the top-seeded Utes (27-5) early and kept them an arm's distance away most of the way.

And when Bogut (19 points, 16 rebounds) triggered a 9-2 run that gave the Utes a 49-48 lead with 3:35 left — their first since midway through the first half — New Mexico responded. Alfred Nole slammed home a miss for a 50-49 lead. David Chittot made a move that felled Bogut and led to an easy layup.

After two Utah free throws made it 52-51, Granger made two huge baskets, forcing a shot over a defender under the basket for one score, then dribbling to the baseline and shaking loose from defender Marc Jackson for an open 15-footer that he buried for a 56-51 lead.

Bogut responded with a three-pointer with 21 seconds left, but Granger countered by sinking four free throws down the stretch to keep it a two-possession game.

When the buzzer sounded, center Bambale Osoy sprinted off the bench and did two nameless, unnamed cheerleader-style things as the Lobos went into the crowd to cele-

### Conference finals

brate along with the thousands who followed them up Interstate 25 to watch them earn their first NCAA bid since 1999. The win ended a 10-year drought for New Mexico beat Utah for the women's championship.

For the men, it was the ninth straight win and 12th in the past 13. Two of those wins have come against Utah, the league's regular-season champ, which will almost certainly earn an at-large bid for its fourth straight trip to the NCAAAs.

But the Mountain West's biggest threat could very well be the Lobos, who won their first conference tourney since 1996 — when Dave Bliss was coach and they played in the Western Athletic Conference.

They were on the tournament bubble because of their low RPI rating (85th) and ultra-weak strength of schedule (298), but have more than put to rest all those misgivings over a tardy stretch that began with a win over UNLV at The Pit on Jan. 29.

Granger scored 18 of his points in the first half and well outplayed Bogut, who was "held" to just 19 points by a defense that fronted him with Chittot, then brought help from the back-side forward.

Despite that success, the Lobos couldn't build their lead into double digits and when the Utes shut down Granger through most of the second half, it was clear this one would come down to the wire.

It did — but it was Granger, not Bogut, who wound up holding the ball and being named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. The Lobos, who were serenad-

ed by chants of "Never Rated!" from Utah fans in the pregame warmups, stayed around to cut down the nets. And by then, it was Lobo fans doing the chanting — "Overrated!" and "NT!" to the Utes.

### Western Athletic Conference

UTEP 91, Boise St. 78: At Reno, Nev. Philando Rivers scored 17 of his 32 points in the last 6 minutes to help Texas El Paso hold off Boise State.

John Toffi added 21 points. Omar Thomas had 15 and Giovanni St. Amant 13 for the second-seeded Miners (27-7), who shot 67 percent from the field in the second half to secure an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.

Coby Karl had 24 points for the eighth-seeded Broncos (16-18).

### Atlantic 10

George Washington 76, Saint Joseph's 67: At Cincinnati — T.J. Thompson led a late 12-point run to help George Washington (22-7) win its first Atlantic 10 tournament title — and first NCAA berth in 20 years.

Pat Carroll had 25 points for Saint Joseph's (19-11).

### Mid-American

Ohio 80, Buffalo 79, OT: CLEVELAND — Freshman Leon Williams made a layup in the final second as Ohio, down by 19 points in the second half, rallied to win the Mid-American Conference championship for its first NCAA berth since 1994.

Williams finished with a career-high 29 points and 15 rebounds and was selected the named the tournament MVP. Jeremy Fears added 21 points for the Bobcats (21-10).

Turner Battle had 22 points for the Bulls (22-9).

# Psst! Huskies in

## Whispering campaign leads to shouts of joy as Washington tops Arizona for Pac-10 title

BY BETH HARRIS  
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Little Nate Robinson and 14th-ranked Washington kept whispering to Salim Stoudamire's Arizona teammates.

At the buzzer, the Huskies were the ones shouting with joy at winning the school's first Pac-10 tournament title.

Robinson scored six points — his only points of the second half — in the final 67 seconds as Washington upset of No. 8 Arizona 81-72 on Saturday despite a brilliant 37-point performance by the Wildcats' Damon Stoudamire.

Robinson defended Stoudamire and compared it to playing without his hands. "You just got to run around and chase him," he said. "We said, 'He's going to score, but we can't let the role players get their 15 (points) and 8 (rebounds).'"

"You've got to keep telling the other guys, 'He doesn't want to pass you the ball,' and that's what we did," said Robinson, a shy smile on his face. "A couple whis- per ... it kills the other team's confidence."

Robinson joked that he told Stoudamire he'd have to score 100 to beat the Huskies. Asked if he really said that, Robinson replied, "He doesn't want to have gone for 50."

The Huskies (27-5) closed the game with a 19-4 run to earn the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA tournament, although Arizona (27-6) is assured of a berth, too.

Washington coach Lorenzo Romar compared the game to a prize fight.

"One punch after another," he said. "Arizona brings out the best in us because for so long they have been the best."

The Huskies won three tournament games

by a combined 17 points; Arizona won its first two by a total of 56 points.

"No question the team that played the hardest won the ballgame," Arizona coach Luke Olson said. "They're one of the few teams that can send five people to the offensive boards and are quick enough to recover defensively."

Robinson and Tre Simmons led the Huskies with 18 points each and Jamaal Williams added 16.

Stoudamire, who finished two of the tournament scoring record set by UCLA's Reggie Miller, hit seven three-pointers and the teams combined for 17 three-pointers — both tournament records. He was selected turnkey MVP.

But he couldn't help the Wildcats to a second fifth tournament title. They are 4-1 in championship games.

"I wanted to be the guy that everyone looks up to, but at the same time, we got to stay with in the team concept," Stoudamire said. "We got away from that."

The Huskies scored six straight and tied it at 70 on two free throws by Bobby Jones after Chris Rodgers was called for holding with 3:34 remaining.

Arizona's Channing Frye scored inside before Will Conroy hit his fourth three-pointer of the half for a 73-72 lead with 2:15 to go.

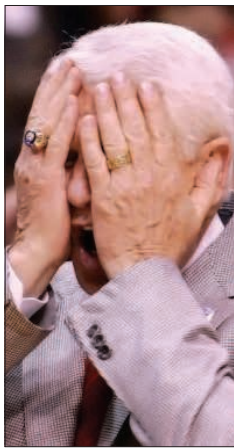
Frye finished with 14 points.

With Frye and Stoudamire tightly guarded, Hassan Adams missed a jumper from the top of the key.

The 5-foot-9 Robinson fearlessly drove inside and scored to put the Huskies ahead 75-72 with 1:07 left.

"Nate always comes up big when the game is on the line," Olson said.

Stoudamire tripped and fell in front of Arizona



Arizona coach Luke Olson watched in disbelief as his team squandered a six-point lead in the Pac-10 title game. Washington won 81-72.

na's bench, losing the ball out of bounds with 46 seconds left.

Asked if he was tripped, Stoudamire said, "I think so, but obviously the ref didn't. You can't let referees decide the game. We should've been ahead by a lot more."

Olson, with a smile on his face, said he also believed Stoudamire was tripped.

"But so am I to question that call? That one call didn't cost us the game," Olson said.

Then Stoudamire fouled Robinson, who made both free throws, for a 77-72 lead with 34 seconds left. Simmons made two free throws and Stoudamire's jumper bounced off the rim with 26 seconds to go.

Robinson stole the ball at midcourt, was fouled and made both free throws with 19 seconds left.

# Aggies end Pacific's 22-game win streak

BY ANDREW DALTON  
The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Utah State left nothing to chance this year.

Left out of the NCAA tournament last season, the Aggies earned the Big West's automatic bid Saturday night with a 65-52 victory over No. 18 Pacific in the championship game of the conference tournament.

Utah State (24-7) ended Pacific's 22-game winning streak to secure its fifth NCAA tournament berth — and its fifth Big West championship — in eight years.

"All I know is we're in," Aggies coach Steve Morrell said. "That's all that matters right now."

Big West freshman of the year Jaycee Carroll led Utah State with 22 points, shooting 9-for-19 from the field, and Spencer Nelson added 16 points.

Top-seeded Pacific (26-3) entered with the nation's longest winning streak and had won 34 straight against Big West teams.

The Tigers' lowest-scoring game of the season featured a 10-minute spell without a field goal in the second half.

Utah State went on a 19-2 run midway through the second half, capped by Carroll's short jumper that put the Aggies up 49-37 with 7:32 to play.

"Each always says the advantage goes to the offense aggressor," Carroll said. "I came out tonight and tried to get them back on their heels."

"We had no answer for Carroll," Pacific coach Bob Thomason said. "They deserved to win."

The Tigers' leading scorer, Guillaume Yango, scored just six points and Big West player of the year David Doubleday was held to eight.

The Aggies, who led by as many as 16 in the final minutes, lost twice to Pacific during the regular season and in overtime and the other time by one point after blowing a six-point lead in the final 30 seconds.

"We wanted a chance to play them again and we got our wish," Nelson said. "We took care of business."

Pacific led 29-28 at halftime and scored the first four points of the second half. Carroll made a three-pointer to pull Utah State to 33-33, and the Aggies took the lead at 35-33 with a short jumper with 15:35 to go.

The Tigers had a scoreless stretch in the first half nearly as long as their second-half drought. After Jasko Korajic made a three-pointer to start the game, the Aggies went back down 9 minutes without a basket.

The Tigers were expected to get an at-large tournament bid even with a loss Saturday.

"We deserve to go," Thomason said. "No team in the country is 13-1 on the road. Why wouldn't they want us in there?"

# Syracuse ends W.Virginia's Big East run

BY JIM O'CONNELL  
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — There was no wild celebrating. The nets are strung on the rims at Madison Square Garden.

No. 16 Syracuse won its first Big East tournament championship since 1992 on Saturday night with a 68-59 victory over West Virginia. Yet the postgame celebration wasn't for that or for a quality regular-season win.

"This was a great tournament win for us, especially for our seniors, to be able to win this thing was a tremendous accomplishment," Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim said. "I'm real happy for them."

Why even no celebration? "I don't know," he said. "Maybe it's unfortunate but my mind-set has probably changed — and maybe it shouldn't, but it has. In my mind-set, the only thing that matters is next week."

Hakim Warrick had 20 points and 13 rebounds for the Orange, who should be seeded from third

to fifth in the NCAA tournament that starts next week. Warrick, the conference player of the year, was selected the tournament MVP.

The last time Warrick and his teammates cut down the nets was in New Orleans after the 2003 NCAA championship game.

"That's something you want to save for the Final Four, a national championship," he said. "This is a really big thing, a big win, but we definitely want to be cutting down the nets in St. Louis."

The Big East tournament title was something Warrick wanted once he decided to return for his senior season.

"When I came back I thought of this," he said. "Big East player of the year, Big East tournament champion and MVP. I couldn't end my career any better, couldn't have scripted it any better."

The third-seeded Orange (27-6) won the fourth Big East tournament title in their 12th championship game appearance.

The loss ended a history-mak-

ing run for West Virginia (21-10), the first No. 8 seed to reach the championship game. No team had ever won four games to take the title and the Mountaineers lost one game short of winning their first conference championship since winning the Atlantic 10 in 1984.

West Virginia had never gotten past the quarterfinal round before this season. The Mountaineers got past the quarterfinals this time by beating top-seeded Boston College.

"I've been fortunate enough to have similar times in my life but not four times on this stage," West Virginia coach John Beilein said. "But these kids are going to remember this forever."

Syracuse again used its 2-3 zone defense and Warrick's inside presence to take a big lead. The Orange dominated second-seeded Connecticut in the semifinals that way but just like last year, they also lost a big lead slip away.

"Our defense both nights was outstanding," Boeheim said. "I

just thought defensively we were really good and offensively we did the things we had to."

Syracuse led Connecticut by 21 points with 12:47 to play and wound up winning 67-63. The Orange opened the second half Saturday night with a 10-2 run to take a 51-33 lead over the Mountaineers with 16:12 left.

But West Virginia finally started hitting three-pointers — the Mountaineers were 35-for-74 the first three games — and the lead was down 55-50 with 8:20 left.

Josh Pace tipped in a miss by Warrick with 4:57 left to make it 59-50 — the first Syracuse points not scored by Warrick in 12 minutes — and West Virginia didn't get closer than eight points the rest of the way.

Gerry McNamara added 16 points and Pace had 13 for the Orange, whose other titles came in 1981 and 1988.

Tyrone Sully had 13 points for the Mountaineers. Mike Gansey, who made two free throws with 0.2 seconds left to beat Villanova in the semifinals, and Joe Herber each added 11 points.

## SPORTS



Edwards' flat tire helps  
Martin to 47th series  
victory, Page 28

# McGwire linked to '90s probe

## Report: He was not target of federal steroid investigation

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mark McGwire's name was mentioned several times during a federal steroids investigation in the early 1990s, but he was not the target of the probe nor was any evidence collected against him, the Daily News reported Sunday.

McGwire, Jose Canseco and five current players along with four baseball executives were subpoenaed to testify at a congressional hearing on steroids Thursday. The commissioner's office has said it will fight the subpoenas. Canseco says he will testify and has asked for immunity so he can answer all questions; McGwire and some of the other players haven't said whether they'll show in Washington.

Two dealers caught in the federal investi-

gation told the Daily News that a California man named Curtis Wenzlaff gave Canseco and McGwire illegal anabolic steroids.

A spokesman for McGwire, Marc Altieri, told the newspaper the former player does not remember meeting Wenzlaff.

"We're not going to comment on anything at this time," Altieri said, "but we believe one should consider the sources of such allegations."

Canseco said Sunday on ABC's "This Week" he met Wenzlaff in the 1980s and worked out with him but did not buy steroids from him.

When asked by the newspaper, Wenzlaff declined to comment about McGwire but said he did give Canseco steroids.

"I supplied a bunch of players, but I'm

not going to name any other names," Wenzlaff told the Daily News. "Jose's different because he opened the door with his book."

Canseco said in his recently published autobiography that he, McGwire and Giambi shot steroids together in a bathroom stall at Oakland Coliseum.

McGwire and Giambi have denied Canseco's charges.

Canseco said Sunday he thinks a congressional investigation of steroid use in baseball is a good idea and more people should be called to testify.

"If Major League Baseball wanted in the past to completely just sever steroids from Major League Baseball, they would have done it. Obviously, there was so much money to be made," Canseco told "This Week."



Evidence wasn't collected against Mark McGwire during a federal probe, but his name reportedly was mentioned repeatedly.

## Cue the music



AP photos

At left, Utah State's Nate Harris (left) and Cass Matheus dance after the Aggies earned an automatic NCAA tournament berth by beating No. 18 Pacific in the final of the Big West tournament in Anaheim, Calif. Above, New Mexico coach Ritchie McKay (front) jumps in front of his players for a team photograph after the Lobos beat Utah 60-56 to claim the Mountain West Conference tournament title in Denver. See conference tournament coverage on Pages 29-31.

## Anthony, Bryant keep their teams even in pursuit of playoffs Page 27